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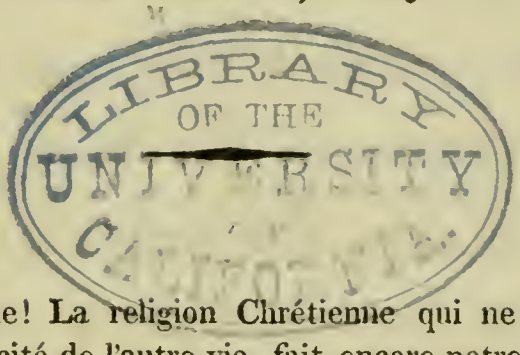
BISHOP SANDFORD

CHRISTIAN POLITICS.

IN FOUR PARTS.

BY

ELY BATES, ESQ.



Chose admirable! La religion Chrétienne qui ne semble avoir d'objet que la félicité de l'autre vie, fait encore notre bonheur dans celle-ci.

MONTESQUIEU; ESPRIT DES LOIX, LIV. XXIV. CH. 3.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY C. WHITTINGHAM,
Dean Street, Fetter Lane;

FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1806.

JC 341
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ADVERTISEMENT.

SOME years ago the Author published a few brief reflections, entitled, A Cursory View of Civil Government. *Upon this tract he has exercised the same right with that of a man, who, having built a house which afterwards he finds small and inconvenient, pulls it down, to erect a larger and more commodious one in its stead; at the same time endeavouring, with a prudent economy, to make the best use he can of the old materials. This seemed necessary to be premised, for the sake of a very few readers, who may have met with the above tract; to others, it can be no point either of curiosity or consequence.*

PREFACE.

After many able attempts of political writers to show the influence of civil government upon the power and wealth of nations, I here presume to offer to the world a few thoughts upon the relation it bears to objects of far more importance, and from which all others must derive their value.

Whoever shall look back on the extraordinary state of human affairs, a few years ago, when the whole frame of society seemed almost in danger of a dissolution, from the mischievous ferments occasioned by some novel principles of political and moral philosophy, will, I think, readily allow, that an endeavour to prevent a return of such disorders, by leading men to a view of their

essential duties and interest, has some title, though from the pen of an obscure citizen, to a degree of public indulgence.

Should there be any reader who shall feel himself disappointed, by finding nothing that is not already familiar to his reflections in the ensuing strictures, he will be pleased to remember, that many readers may not be equally furnished with himself; that every man is not in a like habit and train of thinking; and that it is incident even to the greatest minds to lose sight of the end in attending to the means, especially when these happen to be such as are suited powerfully to strike the imagination, and interest the passions, which is frequently the case of political subjects and discussions. The debates of senates, the councils of princes, the arrangements of war and peace, are matters of so great a sound, and carry in their front such a show of consequence, that few are able so far to resist the im-

pression, as to regard them with a steady reference to their proper use, namely, the advancement of the real virtue and happiness of mankind; which is the only just end of all human purposes and endeavours. To recal and attach the attention to this great object; to explain its connection with civil polity, and of both with religion; again, to state the reasons there are for contentment under any moderate government, and to enforce a due regard and submission to the actual government under which we live; and, lastly, (seeing the effects of political wisdom, in its greatest efforts, and operating in the most favourable circumstances, are very limited and uncertain) to point out independent sources of enjoyment under all governments, and in all situations, is the design of the present work; which, if moderately executed, can hardly fail to yield some profit both to the political and the christian reader.

Should we suppose some statesman (as we may suppose any thing that is not impossible) sufficiently inclined and at leisure to cast an eye on the following pages; though they would probably add nothing to his stock of political science, they might suggest to him a train of reflections in which he was far more interested, and which *before* might seldom have engaged his attention. From the transient and varying regulations of municipal law, and of the law of nations, he might be led to eternal and immutable morality; and from the feebleness and imperfection of human government, to the perfection and potency of the divine.

Should the reader be of a more religious character, he may learn from the perusal of this volume, while he *seeks the kingdom of God*, to pay a due regard to the *ordinances of men*; and while he prepares himself for the society of angels and of the *spirits of the*

just, to be studious of the peace and welfare of the society of which he is now a member. Thus may the secular politician learn to be a better christian, and the christian to be a better subject than he was before.

To contribute in any measure to these happy effects; to convince, though it were but a single individual among his countrymen, of the special obligation he is under both to be a good subject and a good christian; as it is the most earnest wish of the author, so he has endeavoured, in order to gain his end, to place his country in the fairest light that truth will admit. And if there be any reflections in the ensuing work which may seem to cast a shade over the present state of our public affairs, either civil or religious, and to raise ominous conjecture respecting our future destiny, this, it is hoped, will neither be made an objection to the work itself, nor to the design with which it was written; but that it will

rather excite the reader to use his utmost endeavours to avert the omen, and to employ every measure in his power, that may tend both to secure and advance the general welfare.

In excuse for the number and length of the quotations may be alleged the opinion of some competent judges, who have thought, that every book should contain as few bare references as possible to other books; since these might either not be found at hand, or, if at hand, might, by the very act of turning to them, unseasonably divert the reader's attention. It is to obviate these inconveniences (which the writer himself has often experienced) and not merely to swell the volume, that, instead of a bare reference, the passage itself is commonly produced; and it is hoped that such readers as find this precaution unnecessary, will pardon it in favour of others who are less provided.

What may be the success of this imperfect essay, the author is not prepared to hazard a conjecture. On the one hand, he is encouraged by the indulgent manner in which a former work * was received by the public; while, on the other, he is checked by a sense of his deficiencies, especially on a subject where he is less in possession of that near and actual experience, which in all practical cases is the great master. This however is not meant as a plea for his book, should it be found, on the whole, a bad one, but as a reason why it is not better; and he trusts it may induce the reader's favourable allowance, that, instead of a bold demand upon his justice, he thus comes forward with a modest appeal to his candour and generosity.

But though the author readily waves all

* *Rural Philosophy*, or Reflections on Knowledge, Virtue, and Happiness, chiefly in reference to a life of retirement in the country.

challenges and pretensions on the score of abilities, he would presume to put in his claim for a share of moderation and impartiality; and this claim, he flatters himself, will not be refused by such as are themselves distinguished for these qualities. From the violent of all parties, whether they are prerogative tories or republican whigs, high churchmen or rigid dissenters, or under whatever name or ensign they appear, he can expect no particular favour, nor even scarce indulge a hope, that he shall entirely escape their censure. Leaving such, therefore, to their own way, till further reflection or experience may lead them to a better, it is to those free and independent spirits, who know how to prefer the whole to a part, and to steer a middle course both in church and state, that, next to the patronage of heaven, he looks for support and countenance; and it is by their judgment that he is willing to stand or fall.

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CHRISTIAN POLITICS.

PART I.

CONTAINING A VIEW OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT IN ITS INFLUENCE ON VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS, CHIEFLY FROM THE RELATION IT BEARS TO *LIBERTY* AND *PROPERTY*.

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SECTION I.

A General Sketch of Man, the Subject to be governed.

TO determine the practical efficiency of any art, it is necessary to consider, besides the art abstractedly in itself, the materials with which it is provided. For want of this it happens, that our most ingenious projects seldom succeed to the extent of our expectations, and that sometimes

they are found utterly impracticable. In speculative mechanics, it is demonstrated that the smallest power may be so applied as to balance the greatest weight; yet no engine can be constructed that will put an atom in equilibrium with a mountain; nor can any skill in architecture erect a house as commodious and durable with mud and straw, as with good brick and cement: so likewise the political art is limited in its effects by the subject on which it operates, namely, man, his natural powers and moral dispositions.

Some who have formed flattering ideas of their own species, are forward to charge the miseries of society chiefly on defective legislation. They will not allow that any incurable perverseness in human nature is perpetually thwarting, and oftentimes defeating, the end of the best institutions. On the contrary, they affect to persuade us, that, were a right system of polity established, but few evils would remain to disturb human life; neither poverty, nor toil, nor oppression would any longer be known; every one would sit contented under *his*

own vine and fig-tree, in all the dignity of independence.

Though it is not probable this was ever seriously believed, yet men being generally dissatisfied with their condition, and unwilling to discover the cause in themselves, they are disposed to seek it in things around them, and sometimes boldly to resolve it into the unhappy state of the public. The inequity and partial execution of the laws, the expence of government, the corruption and incapacity of ministers, the inadequate representation of the people, the discouragement of commerce, and the want of general liberty and equality, are perversely represented as the great sources of private calamity.

That the happiness of every member of civil society is partly dependent on its government and laws, cannot justly be disputed; nor that it is the duty of those who are entrusted with the care of the public, to do all in their power to promote its welfare;—by relieving its burdens; by duly enforcing former regulations, and framing such as are wanting; for it is not to be sup-

posed that any nation ever yet arrived at that pitch of political perfection, as not to be capable of further improvements.

But while the ruler is proposing to himself the best models, and endeavouring to copy them as closely as possible, the subject should learn to regulate his expectations by what is practicable in the existing circumstances; he should consider, that all Utopian theories, however pleasing in contemplation, are dangerous in their tendency; as, by laying a ground for disappointment, they are calculated to generate secret discontents, which may proceed to open murmurs, to seditions, to rebellions, to anarchy, and ruin. Every man, therefore, should beware how he listens to such fantastic theories as may lead him to sacrifice real blessings to delusive hopes, and thus to lose the substance by catching at the shadow.

Let us then endeavour calmly to consider, not what might be done if men were what they ought to be, disposed to universal benevolence, and directed by reason and justice; or how much the happiness of society might be advanced and secured, if

rulers were always wise and patriotic, and subjects cheerfully submissive to just authority; but what is fairly to be expected in the present actual state of human nature.

A few general strictures on man may therefore not unfitly introduce the following discourse.

I. Man, at his entrance into the world, is little superior to a mere animal. His pains and his pleasures are confined to his senses; if these are gratified, he is at rest; if craving, he is unquiet and clamorous; his appetites are under no direction from reason or choice, and the infant flies to his mother's breast at the single impulse of nature, as the young of other animals to the dug; or, if deprived of his proper nourishment, he manifests the same kind of uneasiness.

After a short time, however, he must be diverted as well as fed; and his rattle will become hardly less necessary to keep him in good humour, than the satisfying of his hunger.

From this early power of the senses arises the great difficulty of education. Before

the mind has well arrived at a capacity of instruction, it is preoccupied with the ideas of animal gratification and infantine amusement, which, by constantly soliciting the attention, often render it an office of much labour and patience to imprint the first rudiments of learning.

As imagination gathers force, the influence of sensible objects is further augmented. This magic faculty will lend a charm to the merest trifles; and to a child of six years old, convert a hobbyhorse or a puppet-show into objects as delightful, as the pride of equipage or the enchantment of a masquerade are to children more advanced. Thus the love of pleasure, and the passions in general, are wonderfully promoted by this illusory power, which, by a silent and rapid progress, often gains a dangerous ascendancy before reason has acquired strength to resist its course.

When the season of youth arrives, in which nature inflames the imagination, and is inflamed by it to the highest degree, the love of pleasure commonly works with impetuous violence; nor does its rage always

terminate at this period; it continues frequently through middle life, and sometimes pursues unhappy mortals to that season when the powers of gratification are enfeebled and broken. To estimate its strength, let us for a moment consider the several mounds and barriers which, in its passage, it forces or surmounts.

It overbears all regard to temporal interest. How often will a young man, with the brightest prospect of success before him, be drawn aside by the lure of sensual indulgence from the road of sober industry, to wander in forbidden paths, in spite of every remonstrance of his friends, or the secret bodings of his own mind, that his rovings will end in poverty or a jail! Nor is it only in preventing the acquisition of wealth that the seduction of pleasure operates; it also consumes many a fair inheritance; families that have shone with lustre for ages are thus sometimes suddenly eclipsed; and those who were born to splendid expectations, compelled to hire out themselves for bread.

It overbears all regard to reputation.

This is the more observable, because a man may run to great excesses, may violate all the laws of sobriety and decency that are not adopted into the code of fashion, without forfeiting his character in the world. And yet such often is the madness of appetite, that it will brook no restraint whatever, divine or human; will both provoke the displeasure of heaven, and the disgrace and contempt of men.

It will also surmount all regard to health, and to life itself. What numbers are thus made to pine away in disease, and brought untimely to their graves, must strike the most careless observation. And if we inquire into our public executions, many of the wretched sufferers will be found among the victims of pleasure.

In the last place, it is commonly an overmatch for reason in its highest improvement. It might have been expected that, after the first fervours of imagination were abated, the intellectual power would gradually have assumed its just dominion over the propensities of animal nature. Instead of this, even after a long training in the schools of

philosophers, and the further instruction of experience, it is often found degraded into a mean spy for appetite, or a suborned advocate to justify its excesses. Among the most celebrated heathen sages, we meet with few without a taint of gross depravity; and what is a more awful illustration of this argument, he who has been accounted the wisest of mankind, who, in addition to the highest human endowments, enjoyed the advantages of divine revelation, fell a prey to his sensual passions!

Under this head may be ranked the *love of ease;* a principle of such deep root in human nature, that persons of the most active disposition are not entirely exempt from its influence, while over some others it reigns with an uncontroled despotism. So dear was this principle in the eyes of Epicurus, that he preferred its gratification before every other kind of enjoyment; and we cannot doubt, that in every age there have been many who, either from philosophy or temperament, or from both in conjunction, have made a like preference; and even in the present period of bustle and

agitation, examples are not wanting of the same indolent and inglorious character.

II. The next great principle by which man is actuated is the *love of consequence*, or of appearing considerable in the eyes of the world; with which is connected a desire of distinction and superiority; since he who is on a level with others attracts no particular notice or regard. This principle discovers itself very early; a child, upon receiving any mark of distinction he is capable of understanding, immediately feels his importance, and is ready to exact a degree of homage from his companions. Nor will this humour, unless timely restrained, be confined to his fellows; little master, by improving every attention paid him, will soon learn to dictate to the servants at home, and perhaps come to give law to the whole house. What Themistocles observed jestingly of his son, that "he was chief of the Greeks, by governing his mother, who governed him, who governed all the rest," is too often realized within the circle of domestic life.

If we look into our public schools, we

shall find few instances of remarkable progress which may not be ascribed to a spirit of emulation. To become the first in a school, or in a class, will generally prove a more powerful stimulus to application than all the beauties of Homer and Virgil. This ambition of pre-eminence, this love of *excelling*, more than of excellence, accompanies every stage and condition of human life.

It is not indeed every man that ardently wishes to be a poet or a philosopher, a judge or a bishop, the general of an army or a minister of state, as there are few whose capacity or situation will admit of such prospects; though it must be confessed, on the other hand, that there is scarce any one so disgraced by nature, unfavoured by education, or depressed by fortune, that may not, if he can find his place, obtain a degree of consequence. And who does not wish to be a great man *somewhere;* or does not affect to be chief in some system, however small and inconsiderable; and if he cannot attain his object by fair and gentle means, is not ready to contend for it?

Hence it is that no political society, in which the point of precedence is not firmly established, can long subsist without contest. For as every citizen, if he cannot attain the first place, will endeavour to approach it as nearly as possible, he must have many rivals to encounter; and consequently will be put to a full trial of his strength, and perhaps suffer many defeats, before he falls into his proper rank. Hence too arise most of those wars and violent commotions which so often agitate the world; while, like Pompey and Cæsar, one prince or state will not endure a superior, nor another an equal; or rather, while each strives for mastery, since (as before observed) it is not mere equality, but dominion, that is naturally the object of human ambition. And it may justly be questioned, whether many examples can be produced of a lasting friendly union between two private individuals, without a tacit demand of superiority on the one part, and a generous compliance with it on the other.

The assertion therefore of some, that *a state of nature is a state of war,* in a qualified

sense is true; taking war as softened and mitigated by an infusion of equity and humanity. For, in his present condition,

"Under hope of heavenly grace, and God proclaiming peace,"

man is not utterly abandoned to his vile and malignant passions.

Nor is this spirit of pride and domination confined to social or political life; it invades the retreats of the learned, and kindles intellectual war among grammarians and critics, historians and poets, philosophers and metaphysicians; nay, it early invaded the church itself, producing heresies, schisms, and persecutions; and under the management of a succession of men, who styled themselves *servants of the servants of God*, grew into a system of tyranny beyond what the world had before known; extended itself over both soul and body; over this life and the life to come. Surely there must be a strange power in this ambitious principle, which could thus make its way in opposition to a religion whose foundation is humility, and whose perfection, charity; and even convert that religion itself into

an engine for accomplishing its own purposes.

Again: It is not only in situations of importance, or in the stated intercourse of life, but on the most trivial and accidental occasions, that a spirit of consequence will display itself. Let two travellers who never met before, and may never meet again, pass only a few hours together at the same inn, or in the same stage-coach, and there will probably be some exhibition of this nature. In whatever circumstances of society a man is placed, he is willing to impress a flattering idea of himself.

Nor is it inconsistent with this, that persons will sometimes seem to court disgrace, by a voluntary submission to degradation and contempt; which may either arise from an occasional prevalence of some other principle over pride, or be no more than a stratagem of this passion itself. Many cringe to a man in power only to rival or supplant him; or, if their ambition soar not so high, they seek a compensation for the indignities they encounter, in the consequence derived from an access to great-

ness amongst those who are placed at a distance.

But however he may stand in the opinion of others, and with whatever contempt or indifference they may think fit to treat him, there is scarce any man who does not appear considerable to himself; he discovers some endowment of nature, some acquired ability, or circumstance of fortune on which to ground his importance. If not distinguished by the inventive power of genius, he finds this defect compensated by a solid understanding; if he cannot, like a certain Greek, raise a small village into a great city, he could do what it seems that Greek could not, *play upon the lute;* if he has neither to boast of place nor pension, he may perhaps pride himself as an independent country gentleman; or, if destitute of all external advantage, and conscious of none within, he will still imagine some latent excellence, which, if happily brought to light, would elevate him to enviable distinction.

Lastly: From the above observations it may appear, that the principle of which we have been speaking is essentially hostile to

the peace and good order of the world. Men who proudly aspire after authority themselves, must of course be disposed to resist it in others; and if they cannot govern, will be sure to be governed as little as possible. It is the same spirit which in different circumstances produces hard masters and disobedient servants, tyrannic rulers and rebellious subjects; and, as a further aggravation, we may add, that it is a spirit which seldom or never lies dormant; other passions seem more subject to intermission; a miser may sometimes forget his hoards, and a debauchee his pleasures; but when is it that the love of consequence is not stirring in the human heart?

III. The last principle I shall consider is *the love of wealth.* This is entirely foreign and adventitious. Wealth is not primarily sought for its own sake, but merely as an instrument for obtaining pleasure or consequence, though gradually it becomes a final object. The process may be illustrated in a familiar instance. Give some pieces of money to a child; he may be pleased with them for their colour, their figure, or the

characters drawn upon them, and that is all; a few shining pebbles might do as well: but when he finds they will procure him sweetmeats, and other little gratifications of which he is naturally fond, besides adding to his consequence among his companions, he begins to view money in another light; from its association with things of themselves agreeable, a new lustre is reflected upon it, and it becomes an object of desire on its own account. And thus an adventitious passion is generated, which in its progress often acquires a strength, which neither any other passion, though implanted by nature, nor the most vigorous reason, is able effectually to resist.

A young man, upon entering the world, is apt to place a generous confidence in his fellow-creatures, which is rarely withdrawn till he has learned by time and experience that men are generally not much to be depended on in cases of exigency, and, least of all, where pecuniary assistance is wanted. He then finds they will be liberal of their advice, but very sparing of their money. This must give him an impression of its

value which he had not before. He is also apt to presume upon himself, and to imagine that his merits and address will be sufficient to extricate him out of all difficulties; and when he finds that there are occasions in which a few pounds would do him more service than all his virtues and endowments, this will naturally enforce powerfully upon him the expediency of pecuniary resources.

During the former part of life, pleasure being the great object of pursuit, it is in order to obtain it that money is eagerly sought, and as eagerly squandered. Avarice shows itself not often in this season; and when it does, it is only in a mind base and groveling, and from which nothing great or excellent, even in the order of this world, is to be expected.

The ardour of passion in youth is commonly succeeded by the ambition of consequence in middle age. When a man is arrived at this period, and as from an eminence looks around upon the world, and beholds some, though endowed with every virtue and talent, abandoned to obscurity because they are poor, while others, though

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destitute both of talents and virtue, with a golden key in their hand open themselves a way to offices of trust or power; must he not be tempted to imagine *that money answereth all things;* that it can both give lustre to merit where it is; and amply supply its place where it is wanting?

Further: As a man's consequence is generally proportioned to his appearance in the world, wealth, which can always command external splendour, possesses irresistible attractions in the eyes of those who have no force of intrinsic worth to make them considerable. To such, in gazing upon it, all that it can purchase rises up as in vision; manors, lordships, stately houses, sumptuous equipages, with a long train of needy dependents and flattering admirers. Hence it cannot fail to become an object of eager pursuit to minds vain and ambitious, and undisciplined in the school of wisdom.

Avarice is properly the vice of age. In the first part of life, as we have already observed, money is sought chiefly for pleasure, and in the next for consequence; but, in the last stage, it is sought for its own

sake. Avarice is the dead sea into which all the other passions disembogue. When a man has lost all relish for the enjoyments of sense, when his heart is become dead to the feelings of tenderness and friendship, when he has conceived a general distrust of mankind, and all his worldly prospects are closed; unless some supernatural light open to him a view into a better world, what remains for him but to cling closely to his wealth, to hug this idol in the dark, and *to say unto gold, thou art my hope, and to fine gold, thou art my confidence!*

This I take to be a just sketch of human nature in general; for there are doubtless many individual exceptions. All young men are not equally addicted to pleasure; some lean more to ambition; and we may now and then encounter, what seems most out of nature, a young griping miser. So in middle life, though this is eminently the season of ambition, it is not unfrequently either wasted by pleasure, or consumed by avarice. And we are sometimes shocked with a lewd, or ambitious, or thriftless old age. Yet, notwithstanding such exceptions,

the above representation, I think, is fairly drawn from life and experience.

Nor does religion itself totally extirpate the evils we have been considering; and if religion fail of this effect, it is in vain to expect it from human discipline. In the best of men some fibres of depravity remain, exhibiting melancholy proof of its stubborn inveteracy. But whatever be the influence of religion upon its true disciples, the number of such is too small materially to affect the present argument.

We may therefore conclude, without any danger of incurring the charge of libelling human nature, that the love of pleasure, the love of consequence, and the love of wealth, have been, and still are, the most prevailing passions amongst men; and are likely so to continue, until some happier period shall arrive, when (in prophetic language) *the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God, and the people shall be all righteous**.

* Isaiah, ch. ii. ver. 6. 9. and ch. lx. ver. 21.

SECTION II.

Of the immediate Ends of Government, and how far they are attainable.

HAVING thus premised a few general observations on man, the subject to be governed, it may be proper, before we proceed to our main design, briefly to consider the more *immediate* ends of government, and how far they are attainable.

Order is the beauty and strength of society; look at ten thousand men in the confusion of a mob, and after they are reduced into a well-disciplined army, and you will see a striking illustration of this position.

Among beings endued with liberty, no regular society can long subsist, if every one is left to his own direction: the diversity of their inclinations, and the limitation of their views, must produce perpetual interference, without some common rule by which to regulate their actions.

What form of society would have taken

place in a state of innocence, of which such evident traces remain in the writings even of pagan antiquity, can be only matter of conjecture. As no crimes would have existed, there would have been no need of criminal jurisdiction; nor of coercive power, when every one stood prompt to the performance of his duty. This is beautifully represented by Ovid, in the following passage of his Metamorphoses, which, though familiar to boys at school, deserves to be here recited:

"Aurea prima sata est ætas, quæ vindice nullo,
Sponte suâ sine lege fidem rectumque colebat.
Pœna metusque aberant, nec verba minacia fixo
Ore legebantur: nec supplex turba timebat
Judicis ora sui; sed erant sine vindice tuti*." LIB. 1.

* The golden age was first, when man yet new,
No rule but uncorrupted reason knew,
And with a native bent did good pursue.
Unforc'd by punishment, unaw'd by fear,
His words were simple, and his soul sincere.
Needless was written law where none oppress'd,
The law of right was written in his breast:
No suppliant crowds before the judge appear'd,
No court erected yet, nor cause was heard;
But all was safe, for conscience was their guard."

DRYDEN.

Yet some regulations, even in this state, might be necessary. We learn from scripture, whence probably many of the fables of heathen poets are a corrupt derivation, that the first man, pure as he came from the hands of his Maker, was placed in the garden of Eden *to dress and to keep it*; which service, whatever it meant, must doubtless have belonged equally to his offspring; and we may probably suppose, that those portions of the soil upon which any of them had separately bestowed their care, would thereby have been rendered, in some degree, exclusive property. And if by the expression *to dress and to keep* is to be understood, besides mere embellishment, a degree of productive labour, there might be required, for the due distribution of the produce, some settled law or rule, which, as the earth at large grew more peopled, would appear to become still more necessary. And generally, in all the intercourse and transactions of such a state, where the law of nature was silent, or not express, some positive regulations might at least be expedient.

If, therefore, some political regimen would be required in a state of things where every individual was disposed to concur in promoting the common welfare, it must be more highly necessary in a state where almost every one concentrates his regards in himself.

We now proceed, after these few remarks on the need of government in general, to consider its present immediate objects, which appear to be the following:

I. PERSONAL LIBERTY.

II. PERSONAL SECURITY.

III. PRIVATE PROPERTY.

IV. PUBLIC DECORUM.

Of these several objects I shall treat in order, and endeavour to ascertain how far they fall within the compass of political regulations.

I. PERSONAL LIBERTY.—This consists in the power of loco-motion, or of going *when* or *where* we please; which power, from the very constitution of civil society, cannot be enjoyed in the same degree by every individual.

No large community can long subsist without a considerable part of its members being appointed to laborious situations and dependent circumstances. It cannot subsist without food and clothing, and these cannot be obtained without labour; and men generally will not labour but upon the urgency of necessity. If every man was provided with a stock of the necessaries of life, or had wealth to purchase them, we should see few shuttles in motion, and few ploughs turning up the soil, till the time came when, having wasted their resources, distress would compel some to the loom and others to the field.

Again: In a civilized state, besides clothing and food, much domestic service is required, of which a great part being neither elegant nor unlaborious, will not commonly be performed by those who can avoid it; which all may do who are under no immediate pressure or fear of want. Therefore, without such a degree of indigence as may dispose some to undergo the daily drudgery of life, and such a degree of affluence as may enable others to reward them for it, we

could expect to find but little either of domestic neatness or comfort.

All this is obviously consequent on the view which we have just given of human nature. For since the love of *pleasure,* (including *indolence,* or the love of *ease)* the love of *consequence* and of *wealth,* are (as we have shown) the three great principles which at present govern mankind; it evidently follows, that those offices of humble life, to which neither pleasure nor honour, and but little profit, is attached, though on them depends the very existence of all civil society, will never be discharged but under the compulsion of necessity; which is the only weight that, in this case, can keep the political machine in motion. And all that can reasonably be proposed by human government, till there shall be a general prevalence of religious principle in the world, is so to regulate this weight, that it may neither break down the machine altogether, nor bear more than needs upon any of its parts.

Hence it will follow, that, to preserve

society from sinking into a savage state, in which every man must be content to fish and hunt for himself, and to wear the skin of the beast he has slain, a large proportion of the people must depend for their subsistence on the toils of husbandry, on useful manufactures, and domestic service; which implies the relation of master and servant, of those who have nothing but their labour to bring to market, and of those who come with a price in their hands to purchase it.

If we apply these remarks to the case of personal liberty, it will appear, that in every civil society, whatever be its form and construction, this power of loco-motion in the majority of its members must necessarily be confined within narrow limits. Persons whose support depends on sedentary employments, or on their occupation within the compass of a house or a farm; that is, in a nation like our own, an immense body of artisans and domestics, with a numerous peasantry, will not find themselves much at liberty to travel or roam abroad for their

amusement. To these inevitable causes of restraint are to be added such as are unnecessary and oppressive, whose operation, in a multitude of cases occurring in families and the various intercourse of life, no human laws can prevent or remedy.

The portion of personal liberty which remains after these deductions, is all that, under the happiest constitution of society, can be enjoyed by the bulk of a people. Individuals, who are placed beyond the necessity of constant labour, will be more at large; and those few who are amply provided, and are under no restraint from others, may ramble round the world at their pleasure, without any impediments except those arising from the want of bodily vigour, the interposition of hills and vallies, with other inconveniences, which no human exertions can entirely obviate or remove. The value of this liberty we may see hereafter.

II. Next to personal liberty we have placed personal security, or the peaceable enjoyment of *life*, *health*, and *character*.

1. As *life* is fundamental to every other blessing, it must be a primary object of all political union to secure it against assault. And this end, in a good measure, is attained under any regular government. By the dread of just punishment which it creates, added to the terror inspired by nature for deeds of blood, the hand of the ruffian is powerfully withheld; and every good citizen may go about his business, or retire to his rest, without fear of violence or molestation.

But though the life of every member of a well-ordered community is thus protected, it is far from being placed in a situation of absolute safety. There is no man, it has been said, and truly, who is not master of another's life, provided he is willing to risk his own; nor is the prince himself, in the midst of his guards, secure from the hand of the assassin; of which we have had more than one alarming instance in our own times and country.

And as life is thus exposed to danger from human violence, so is it likewise from

human inadvertence or accident; and still more from the various casualties and disasters which happen in the course of the natural world. Our ordinary journals will afford us a melancholy history of the sudden extinction of life;—by shipwrecks; by hurricanes and inundations; by fire; sometimes by thunder and lightning, or tremendous earthquakes; by the suffocation of mines, or a pestilential atmosphere; and by other disorders of the elements, equally unforeseen and irresistible: all which may teach us the great insecurity of our present being, after the utmost care we can employ for its preservation.

2. Another branch of personal security which falls under the care of civil government, is the *health* of the subject. Among the means which a wise policy would employ to this purpose may be reckoned, the prevention of idleness; the restraint of vice and luxury; the encouragement of agriculture, and other manly occupations, in order to lessen the number of sedentary employments, and to reduce the extent and population of cities and large towns, which are

the graves of the human species; above all, the affording of due countenance to piety and virtue, which, according to one of our medical philosophers, contain the true secret of health and long life. Yet though by these and similar methods, many of those maladies which now severely afflict the world, might be prevented, and a considerable portion added to the stock of public health, there would still remain behind, to evince the impotency of all human efforts, the incurable malady of old age, which nothing but a return to the dust whence we were taken can either prevent or terminate.

3. The last branch of *personal security* we have specified, is *character*; a possession by many more valued, though often more precarious and exposed, than any other.

The love of consequence we have seen is a prevailing passion in man; and reputation, by which we hold a place in the good opinion of others, may be considered as a species of consequence. This, when sought, as it too often is, by base or crooked means, and with no higher views than to advance a name, or promote some temporal interest,

is certainly a vicious object of pursuit, and then only becomes allowable, when it is prosecuted in a just and laudable manner, and with an entire reference to God, who is the only fountain of all true honour.

But however sought or obtained, it is a possession very frail in its nature, and eminently exposed to the attacks of malignity and envy.

Such is its frailty, that no delicacy of health can be more alive to the impressions of the atmosphere, than the tenderness of reputation is sensible to fame and rumour. Every day's experience may convince us, that the least breath of calumny is enough to injure, and a violent blast to destroy, the most established character. And how much a distinguished name is exposed to the attacks of envy and malignity, we may learn from the readiness with which it is run down even by those who have no interest in its abasement; of which, we have a trite instance in the illiterate clown who gave his vote for the banishment of Aristides, for no other reason than because he heard him everywhere celebrated under the title of

*the just**. And this spirit will discover itself still more in those who are themselves engaged in the race of honour, and at the same time are actuated by no higher motive than that of surpassing others. A man of this description is capable of any meanness or injustice. He will be disposed to view with jealousy a rising reputation, though it should not obstruct his own; in case of rivalship, if he cannot fairly outstrip a competitor, he will employ every art to supplant him; and if compelled to own his superiority, he will accompany the acknowledgment with every circumstance of invidious derogation. Nor is competition for wealth or pleasure less disparaging and injurious than emulation of excellence.

Further: The same spirit may be remarked in the readiness with which libels, satires, and other malicious tracts, are circulated in public; and perhaps still more in the liberty generally taken with the good name of the absent in our ordinary intercourse; when to indulge a sally of wit, or a momentary triumph of vanity, to gratify a

* See Plutarch.

sudden emotion of envy, or even from mere wantonness and caprice, the character of a neighbour or friend is lightly treated, or injuriously depreciated. To moralists in every age this has been a standing topic of complaint, as involving no small part of the misery of human life.

Yet these are evils, however great, which must generally be suffered in order to avoid still greater: if every word or action that might be construed into sedition or defamation was liable to a legal process, our civil liberties might be endangered; human life would become a scene of perpetual litigation; a gloomy suspicion would hang over our social intercourse; the harmless pleasantry of familiar conversation would be checked; while ingenious malice would still continue to diffuse its poison in a manner too subtle for legal cognizance.

Upon the whole then it appears, that both our life, our health, and character, (which we have ranked under the head of *personal security)* are blessings, after all the precautions that can be taken, of a very precarious nature; that in every stage of

our journey they are exposed to the incursions of innumerable wrongs and mischances, against which it would be in vain to look for protection to laws and government, or to any human power or prudence. All that these can do is to plant a guard, oftentimes weak and ineffectual, at a few of the avenues through which they are assailable, while a thousand others are left naked and without defence.

III. The third end of government above stated, is *property*, concerning which let it be first observed, that, if the great law which commands us *to love our neighbour as ourselves* had universally prevailed, a community of goods might not have been inconsistent with public order, since every man would then have readily furnished his contingent of labour, and required no more from the common stock than a moderate supply of his wants.

In such a state of mutual benevolence a nation would have resembled children of the same family, and their dwellings so many apartments in the same house; no

bars and bolts would have been necessary to prevent violent intrusion, and they would have sat down at each other's table with the familiarity of brethren.

The world, however, at present, is too much under the rule of selfish passions to admit of such an intercommunity. There would be so many drones in the hive, that the labouring bees would never be able to furnish the supplies; which alone (omitting other considerations) shows the expediency, if not the necessity, of that policy, by which every one enjoys his *peculium* under the joint protection of the community.

For a man to possess something that he can say is *mine*, to sit down in his own house as in a castle, and quietly eat the fruit of his own labour, or enjoy his paternal inheritance without fear of injury or annoyance; is a blessing which can be duly estimated by those only who have experienced the insecurity of a tyrannic or savage state. Even merely to contemplate a constitution of society, which communicates this blessing to millions, must yield an exquisite satisfaction

to every mind that is sensible to order and general happiness.

Yet here also, as in the case of *personal security*, riches, of whatever kind, in spite of all laws and precautions, are not exempt from the common instability of other sublunary things; they are exposed to continual frauds and depredations; to innumerable disasters and casualties; so great is their uncertainty, as if it grew out of their own nature: *They make themselves wings*, says Solomon, *they fly away**.

2. With relation to the distribution of property, the best possible state of society seems to be, when the bulk of a people can subsist comfortably with moderate labour, and cannot subsist without it. And indeed no society can enjoy much permanency beyond this state; for suppose it elevated a few degrees higher, whether by a sudden influx of wealth, or by any other means, the number of idle hands that would thus be thrown upon it, and the consequent deficiency of labour, would probably soon

* Prov. xxiii. 5.

reduce it more below its proper situation, than it had been raised above it.

There is no way, that I know of, for the body of citizens to relieve themselves of the necessity of labour, but by a most detestable division of mankind into freemen and slaves; by which the one part constitute themselves the lords and tyrants of the other. This we know was a practice with the most celebrated republics of antiquity, and notwithstanding the greater light and liberty of the present times, is still a practice; which, however, we have reason to believe is drawing towards a close, if not by an act of voluntary abolition (an honour to which our rulers seem not forward to aspire) yet from the general state and circumstances of the world, that will no longer endure the continuance of a grievance, under which it has groaned for so many ages.

IV. There remains now only the last end of government, above specified, to be briefly considered.

No rational policy will permit the dignity of society to be violated, or its peace dis-

turbed, by notorious profligacy, by tumult or riot, or by similar disorders, although not attended with any actual infringement of liberty or property. Such licence ought not to be suffered to infest even a village; much less should it be tolerated in a nation at large. Mr. Locke himself, who is known to be a strenuous advocate for freedom, makes it a part of the office of the magistrate to punish debauchery and immorality, and compel men to lead *sober and honest lives**. And notwithstanding the increase of liberality since his time, both flagrant breaches of the peace, and open and scandalous vice, still continue in this country to be objects of political animadversion, and will ever so remain, unless reason and virtue should entirely withdraw themselves from amongst us, and leave us a prey to barbarism and false philosophy.

Let us then proceed to inquire for a moment, how far the coercive power of government is adequate to the maintenance of *public decorum*, which is chiefly violated in the following respects:

* Third Letter on Toleration, p. 85-6, and 282-3.

First, by *lewdness* and *debauchery*. So violent is the propension of mankind to sensual indulgence, that no human power can always restrain them from open and scandalous excesses. Indeed by the strict execution of the laws now in force amongst us, and by others to supply the deficiency of the present, much more might be done to check the progress of evils, which threaten even our political existence; though, after every provision, nothing could prevent bad men from diffusing their poison in a more subtle and insinuating manner, whether by the dubious turn of their conversation, or the general style of their behaviour. And in regard to that great medium of communication, the press, unless very severe and perhaps unwise restrictions were laid upon it, the corruption of authors will be sure to make it an engine of obscenity, as well as of other mischiefs; at least, in a covert and delicate way, which being less shocking to our moral feelings, is suited to spread the contagion with greater effect. These therefore are evils, which are more the subjects of lamentation than of political redress.

Secondly, by *gaming*: which, although it has no particular ground in human nature, and is no more than an accidental determination of its general propensity to dissipation; when it has once made its way into society, and obtained the sanction of fashion, is an evil not easily to be suppressed, or even checked, by the wisest government. Of this we have a striking example in our own country, where, in spite of many discouraging statutes *, it prevails to an alarming degree, defeating every provision of law by a principle of false honour, which has often a strange influence with men who possess but little sense either of virtue or decency.

Thirdly, by *profaneness*. By this I understand a contemptuous disregard to the being and providence of God, which commonly shows itself by using his name with irreverence, and neglecting his worship. Mr. Boyle is said never to have mentioned the name of God, without a visible pause in his discourse; and whoever does it with

* See Blackstone's Com. vol. iv. p. 172-3.

habitual levity, discovers a mind destitute of every religious principle. The neglect of public, which I fear is almost always accompanied with an equal neglect of domestic worship, may be thought no less chargeable with profaneness; as it seems to insinuate, either that there is no God, or that our obligations to him require no such acknowledgment; or that we are too indolent, or too proud to offer it; for we can hardly admit with some, that the heart may be inspired with devotion when so considerable an expression of it is wanting. And were this indeed possible, such abstracted piety, by assuming the appearance of irreligion, must have the same effect upon others, and on this account be very culpably deficient. The small success of the methods taken by our legislature to remedy these evils, shows how little can be expected from fines and penalties, in those points which relate to our most important interests.

Fourthly, *by a want of due respect to the constitution, whether religious or civil, under which we live.* To treat the establishments

of our country with insolence or scurrility, or even as subjects of mere disputation, is manifestly an offence to public decency; although such grave discussion as may serve to their correction or improvement, is not only consistent with the regard we owe them, but may proceed from it. How to suppress the former without discouraging the latter, is a difficulty to which no policy is equal. There have been periods when prescription was reason, and when time gave a sanction to the grossest usurpations upon the persons and property, the understandings and consciences of men; there have been periods too in which a wild and lawless spirit has gone forth, and boldly called in question every opinion consecrated by the veneration, and every institution confirmed by the practice, of former ages. If men could have been taught wisdom by past example, by this time they would have learned, first, in respect to truth, to have sought it, though without a superstitious attachment, yet not without a becoming deference to ancient opinions; and, secondly, in respect to government,

rulers would have learned to act for the people, and the people to submit cheerfully to lawful and moderate government. The fact is, that, till some great revolution take place in human nature, the world will go on at its old rate, will continue to be swayed by its interests and passions, and perpetually be vibrating between truth and error, tyranny and licence, in spite of all the efforts of patriots and philosophers.

Fifthly, by *incivility*. It has been often justly observed, that the miseries of the present life arise not so much from great calamities, which but seldom happen, as from a succession of small vexations, which fret a man's spirit, exhaust his patience, and so bring him into a state of perpetual irritation. Whatever therefore tends to obviate these petty evils, highly deserves the attention of every one who either values his own quiet or that of others. On this account civility is an object of important consideration, as it serves to prevent those minute offences which are so apt to disturb our friendly intercourse, and frequently to convert it into a state of secret animosity or

of open hostility. Man is a being who naturally demands respect, and often suffers more patiently a substantial injury than a slight contempt, which, if unnoticed, would neither affect his reputation nor his fortune. How deeply the resentment of such shadowy offences may penetrate the human heart, we have a striking example in the story of Haman, who, because Mordecai the Jew refused him those tokens of honour paid him by others, lost all enjoyment of himself and of his elevated condition, and conceived the dreadful purpose of revenging upon a whole nation his quarrel with an obscure stranger. This instance is only singular by its magnitude. There are few persons, I fear, who may not look back upon certain conjunctures, when their revenge has been excited, their nights disturbed, and all their comforts embittered, because some unlucky Mordecai had denied them that respect they thought their due; nor is it very uncommon for men of false honour to put to hazard the lives of others, as well as their own, for the sake of chastising some petty insult or ceremonious neglect. Hence then ap-

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pears the importance of attending to the usual forms of civility among beings so ready to give and to take offence. Of this the Chinese are so sensible, that at Pekin there is a court established for regulating the ceremonial of the empire, both among natives and strangers. This punctilious regard to manners is strongly marked in one of their volumes, which contains, as we are told, no less than three thousand rules for the behaviour of persons of every rank, and upon every occasion.

Now, though all these regulations could in every instance be reduced exactly to practice, which is evidently impossible, there would yet remain, as will easily be conceived, numberless ways of conveying insult, which the formality of respect would only render still more provoking. Human nature is a Proteus that cannot be held by any merely outward constraint: nothing short of a moral revolution, in which pride gives place to humility, and selfishness to benevolence, can produce a genuine and uniform civility of manners.

These few remarks may suffice, concern-

ing the influence of civil government upon liberty, security, property, and public decorum, which we have stated to be its first and immediate objects; and, from its bearing upon these objects, shall next proceed to estimate its influence on virtue and happiness: only premising that, in order to simplify our discourse, we shall reduce the four heads now stated, under those of *liberty* and *property*, which, when taken extensively, will be found to comprize the other two.

SECTION III.

An Estimate of the Influence of Civil Government on Virtue and Happiness, from the Relation it bears to Liberty.

IT is intended, in the present section, to take a view of civil government in the following respects: first, As it restrains liberty; secondly, As it improves and enlarges it; lastly, As it is a species of moral discipline: and in each of these cases to estimate the effect on Virtue and Happiness.

I. What I have to offer on the first point proposed, I shall introduce with the following brief remarks on *natural liberty*, and the limitations under which it is found in man.

The liberty of every agent must be limited by his power, the liberty of doing any thing necessarily presupposing the power of doing it; hence *that* being only whose power is infinite possesses absolute liberty.

Whatsoever God determinately wills to do, is done. He spake, and the earth was; he commanded, and it stood fast; he said,

*Let there be light, and there was light**. In respect to all other beings, their volitions are only efficient within a certain sphere marked out by their Creator.

As man apparently holds the lowest place in the scale of rational existence, it is probable his liberty corresponds to his situation, and is consequently of less extent than what naturally belongs to the other orders of intelligences; of whom the least, for any thing we know to the contrary, may be able to *wield these elements* at his pleasure, over which the most powerful combination of human strength and skill has so little command.

Whatever then is naturally beyond the sphere of human power, is no object of human liberty; no one, for instance, is free to walk across the ocean, or fly to the moon; to control the course of the winds, or the tides of the ocean†; and in innu-

* Ps. xxxiii. 9. Gen. i. 3.

† "Canute was the greatest and most powerful prince of his time. Some of his flatterers breaking out one day in admiration of his grandeur, exclaimed that every thing was possible for him: upon which the monarch,

merable cases, within the natural limits, liberty may be wanting: how often is a man unable, and therefore not at liberty to gratify his ambition, his appetites, or his interest, however willing he may be to do it, merely for want of occasions and opportunities!

Thus we see the narrow boundaries of the liberty of man. The cases are comparatively few in which he is able to act as he will, and this inability is one of the happiest circumstances of his condition; since, in his present state of depravity, power generally serves him to no other end than to do mischief to himself, to disturb the regular course of nature, or the order of political and social life.

Indeed an unrestrained liberty would be

it is said, ordered his chair to be set on the sea-shore; and as the waters approached, he commanded them to retire. But when the sea still advanced, and began to wash him with its billows, he turned to his courtiers, and remarked to them, that every creature in the universe was feeble and impotent, and that power resided only with that Being who could say to the ocean, *Thus far shalt thou go and no further.*" See Hume's Hist. of England.

incompatible with the very being of society, which cannot subsist without submission to some common authority, by which the relative conduct of its members may be regulated, and their several claims adjudged and settled.

But though all political society in its very nature implies restraint, yet, under a wise government, none will be imposed wantonly or without sufficient reason: either it will be necessary for the protection of each member of the community in his particular rights; for the maintenance of public order; or it will in some other way contribute to the common good. Hence, as under such a government the subject is only prevented from *doing wrong*, whether in respect to individuals or to the public at large, it is obvious that the restraints under which he lies, must be no less favourable to his own virtue, and consequently to his real happiness, than they are needful to the security and welfare of his fellow-citizens.

To be deterred from violence, injustice, and brutality, must always be for our benefit; and although a restriction in things of

an indifferent nature, which the public good may sometimes render necessary, may possibly operate to our particular disadvantage, this is more than compensated by the salutary check it gives to our natural selfishness, which would lead us to pursue our own at the expence of the general interest.

II. We have next to consider government as it improves and enlarges liberty.

And, in the first place, let it be observed, that even the restraints we have now stated, produce, on the whole, this effect; since they less abridge our own liberty, as binding upon ourselves, than they extend it as binding upon others. To be fully satisfied of this, we need only to attend to the following consideration:—If every man was left to act according to his own will and pleasure, there would arise a general contest for power, for wealth, and sensual gratifications; in the pursuit of these objects each would be liable to be thwarted by the ability or address, the force or artifice of his neighbour; he could not even rear a hut, or plant a garden, without danger of ob-

struction in the attempt, or of deprivation in the possession; whereas every member of a well-regulated state may, with a manly security, pursue his own good or convenience, or those of his friends or neighbours, in any way that is not plainly inconsistent with the laws of his country. Whence it is obvious, that law, even in its restraints and prohibitions, is a source of liberty.

2. In a state of civil society, liberty is further increased by that accession of power which arises from mutual aid and co-operation; for, as in free-agents, power and liberty are commensurate, whatever goes to extend the former must equally extend the latter.

A solitary individual, in whatever circumstances, can do but little; nor can a nation of savages, where every one acts in a great measure independently of the rest, do much more. Throughout such a state there will unavoidably be found a kind of melancholy sameness and monotony; the same miserable habitations, the same precarious mode of subsistence, the same rudeness of character and manners; all which must evince how greatly the human powers

are in such circumstances cramped and limited in their exertions: but when man becomes a member of society, though in its earliest stage, where a number of heads and a multitude of hands co-operate in one design, he will find many difficulties obviated, many facilities of living with ease and security afforded, and consequently that his sphere of action is considerably improved and extended.

Liberty will receive a still greater increase, when, in the more advanced stages of society, to mutual co-operation is added knowledge, and particularly the knowledge of those sciences and arts, which instruct us in the laws and powers of nature, and how to apply them more advantageously to our profit or pleasure. Thus enlightened by science, and provided with fit machines and instruments, we are free to traverse the ocean, or to dive into its depths: to ascend the atmosphere; to travel, in some sense, with the planets; and to penetrate even the starry regions: or, on this solid globe we inhabit, to construct works, and produce effects, which no combination of brute force

or unlearned skill would ever be able to accomplish, and which, prior to experience, might be thought impossible to human beings.

After these reflections on external liberty, let it be permitted to consider for a moment the relation betwixt civil government and *that* liberty which is more internal and intellectual, and the consequent effect upon virtue and happiness. The liberty now in question is of so tender and delicate a nature, and requires such a rare concurrence of favourable circumstances to produce it, that it will scarcely be found to exist at all out of political society; and but seldom, even within this pale, in any eminent degree. When the wants of the body are to be supplied by daily labour, there can be little room for mental excursions; and we should generally look in vain for flights of genius, or the severe investigations of reason, amongst hordes of savages, or in the mass of civil communities, which, from the unavoidable condition of humanity, must be chiefly engaged in corporeal employments. It is only amongst those classes of

a cultivated people which can live comfortably upon their own fortune, or by the rewards held out to intellectual exertion, that we can probably expect to meet with men of a free and enlarged understanding.

It is therefore in those states whose animating principle is liberty, that we must look for a just exercise of reason, or a spirit of free inquiry. Under despotic governments, the mind lies abject and depressed with the body, without any ardour for rational investigation, which might draw down the vengeance of a power founded in ignorance and injustice; and this general depression of reason goes still further to strengthen the hands of despotism. Thus civil and intellectual slavery generate and increase one another; and the same is true of liberty. Let the government be free, and it will no less elevate and liberalize the public understanding, than it will sink and degrade it, when despotic. On the other hand, let the public mind be dignified and expanded with knowledge, and it will liberalize the government; as it will be sure to invite op-

pression and tyranny, when contracted and debased by ignorance.

Hence it may appear, how much the virtue and happiness of society is connected with the exercise of a free and expansive, yet solid understanding; or, in other words, with a just liberty of thinking; a liberty that should carefully be distinguished from the rovings of a wild and vigorous imagination, which delights itself with framing new systems of religion or government, and with a perverse opposition to whatever is already established; and often proves equally mischievous to the public and the individual.

Let him therefore who is ambitious of breaking the shackles of credulity and prejudice, and who means, at the same time, to be of any real service to the world or to himself, learn to prefer plain and practical truth to the most plausible theories; and secondly, before he goes in quest of new opinions, let him carefully examine the old, and remember to propose his speculations with a due regard to the authority of others; since, without this modesty and precaution, he may come to be profane or heretical in

religion, and seditious in politics; and to need that control from his superiors, which he is unwilling to exercise upon himself.

Indeed to restrain the excesses of a spirit of inquiry, without depriving society in some measure of its use, is, I suppose, beyond the reach of political wisdom. All human advantages must be taken as they exist, entangled with evils which it is impossible entirely to separate; if we can get rid of the more importunate, it is all we can reasonably expect. Wise and moderate governments will therefore lean to the side of discussion, as generally tending to their own improvement, and the common good of mankind; and will think it sufficient if they can prevent its more material inconveniences.

III. The connection of civil government, or of a social state, with Virtue and Happiness, will yet further appear, if we consider it as a species of moral discipline, first in respect to the Will; and secondly, to the Passions.

Notwithstanding some preceding strictures

upon this subject, it is one of so much importance as to deserve a more particular and distinct consideration.

We all know that habits are formed by repeated acts, and that every faculty is invigorated by exercise; this is eminently true respecting the Will. Let a child be suffered for sometime to do as he pleases, and we see him become heady and violent, indignant at the least opposition, and determined to pursue every object that strikes his fancy. Nor is it absolutely necessary that the object be naturally desirable; the will can lend it attractions by the mere act of choosing it, though before indifferent. And in things pleasing in themselves, it is an infusion of self-will which often gives them an additional relish. Nay, what is still more strange, such is the malignant potency of this principle, that it can transform even misery itself into something more desirable than happiness, when flowing from obedience and due subordination.

> "Better (says satan) to reign in hell, than serve in heaven."

It must therefore be highly dangerous for

a creature, naturally depraved, to be left without restraint; and should we consider political government in no other light than as a moral discipline, it would be found of no small importance.

The chief misery of man is, that he is set up for himself, affects to be his own lord, and would act in disdain of all authority whatsoever. To reclaim this spirit, and reduce it to a proper submission, is one happy tendency of a well-ordered policy. Under such a regimen a man finds himself perpetually controled by salutary restrictions, and is obliged at every turn to yield up his own to the will of his lawful superiors. Thus he acquires a habit of proper subjection, and the frowardness of his nature becomes partly corrected.

Nor is the prince or chief magistrate, in a limited government like our own, deprived of this advantage arising from a submission to just authority; for though there is no other branch of the state to which he is responsible, he is still under a regular control from the laws and constitution of the country; an advantage which may serve no

less to secure his own virtue, than it is necessary to the safety and welfare of the people.

Again: To man, as he is now disposed, an unrestrained liberty (to omit the danger arising from it to his future happiness) would contribute much less to his present enjoyment than might at first be imagined. Persons who can do as they please, are often at a loss to know what they would please to do; half their time is wasted in idle suspense, and the other in wandering from one design to another, without prosecuting any to good effect; and all that satisfaction which arises from a useful plan of life early adopted and successfully pursued, is commonly lost by those who are not strictly confined to their object by the authority of their superiors, or the urgency of their circumstances: hence it is often seen, that younger brothers, who are obliged to apply themselves to a profession, pass more comfortably through life than the heir of the family; who, from being left to indulge his own humour, becomes capricious and restless, uneasy to himself and to to all around him.

There are few situations more undesirable than that of a man left to himself, and condemned to rove in his own uncertainties*. As in taking a journey, when we have to cross a spacious plain, the eye after a while grows weary with wandering, the spirits become feeble and scattered, and we are glad to enter an inclosed country that presents us with objects on which both the eye and the mind may rest, and be refreshed; so in the journey of life, those parts which confine us to definite and allowable pursuits, are commonly more agreeable than others where we are left to roam at large.

Further: If we compare a condition of moderate subjection with what is looked upon in the world as a state of independence, the former will appear preferable for these two reasons; first, because it is less liable to anxious deliberation; and secondly, because it is less responsible for consequences. When a man's conduct is prescribed to him

* It is finely observed by Tacitus of the Armenians, after they had thrown off the government they were under, that they became, *incerti, solutique, et magis sine domino quàm in libertate.* An. lib. 2.

by his lawful superior, he has nothing to do but practically to attend to it, provided what is enjoined be neither contrary to any divine command, nor to any law of immutable morality; whereas he who has others and himself at his disposal, is frequently subject to the perplexity of dubious counsels, and to the uneasiness arising from the consideration, that he is answerable for every measure he adopts, and for every command he imposes. All this must be felt by every man of principle and reflection; and should his conscience happen to be delicate and scrupulous, must sometimes be felt by him in a manner very painful and distressing*.

* If we consider this, we shall not wonder to find many persons in the Romish church committing themselves to such as may direct them in ambiguous cases. When a tender conscience unites with a diffidence of temper, it naturally seeks repose in this way. As the danger however is great of mistaking its guide, and as those men who are best qualified for so difficult an office will be the least forward to undertake it, the Protestants have properly dismissed, with other peculiarities of popery, this scheme of *direction*, as more likely to be abused to the stupifying of conscience, than improved to the relief of groundless scrupulosity.

Secondly: That excess of liberty which tends so much to vitiate the will, and to produce anxious suspense, no less tends to deprave the passions, and augment their natural violence, which must often end in bitter disappointment. The savage ferocity, and enormous lewdness, with other monstrous vices, which marked the characters of many of the Roman emperors, as it cannot reasonably be ascribed to any extraordinary corruption of nature, must be resolved into the want of that salutary discipline and restraint, which served, in some measure, to keep other men within the bounds of virtue and decency. Nero, for some years after his accession to the empire, was celebrated for his moderation and clemency; he abolished many of the public taxes, and diminished others; and when called upon to sign the death-warrant of a criminal, he would exclaim; *Quam vellem nescire literas!* How happy if I could not write! Yet this man, at length intoxicated with power, became a monster of profusion and cruelty; his palace was overlaid with gold, and a thousand carriages attended

him in his journies; and such was his cruelty, that to this day it continues proverbial; to all which were added the most extravagant and unnatural lusts. A similar depravation of character is noted in Caligula, Caracalla, and others of that imperial race; which seems to have been raised up by Providence to teach the world of what dreadful enormities our nature is capable, when left without control, and abandoned to its own propensities. But there is no necessity of recurring to former periods to show, that those who have been least under the government of others are generally least able to govern themselves; and that power, when it falls into such hands, is commonly converted into an instrument of sensuality and injustice. We need only to take a view of our own times, to be supplied with too many examples to this purpose.

Nor is an unrestrained indulgence of the passions more unfavourable to virtue, than it is to enjoyment. This will evidently appear, if we attend only to their encroaching and insatiable nature when left without check, together with their aptness to inter-

fere and clash with one another, which, separate from every moral consideration, and what hereafter may take place under the righteous government of God, can hardly fail to breed much disquiet in the bosom where they are suffered to reign uncontrolled. Of this, the wise monarch of the Jews had full experience, which he entered upon record for the warning and instruction of all future ages. *He sought in his heart,* as he tells us, *to give himself unto wine, and to lay hold on folly; he made great works, built houses, and planted vineyards; he gathered silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and provinces; gat men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men: whatsoever his eyes desired he kept not from them, nor withheld his heart from any joy.* And what was the result of all this toilsome forecast and provision? *Then,* says he, *I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do; and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit.* From such a trial, made with every possible advantage, we may there-

fore conclude with certainty, that to make the most of the passions, even as to this world, is not to allow them full scope, but to subdue their natural wildness, and inure them to a ready submission to the just authority of law, both divine and human.

SECTION IV.

On Moral Liberty.

There is another species of liberty, on which I am willing to bestow a few strictures in this place, although its connection with civil government is less direct and immediate. Should the reader think it a digression, it is one which I hope he will excuse, on account of the importance of the subject.

The liberty I here intend is *moral*, and consists in a power of acting in all cases with an habitual and prevalent regard to what is morally right.

That this is a liberty pre-eminent to all others needs little illustration. What would it avail a man to climb the Alps or the Andes; to visit the pyramids of Egypt, or the great wall of China; or, more wisely perhaps, sit at home, under the protection of equal laws, and quietly enjoy his portion of the good things of this life? What

would it avail him to range through all the arts and sciences, and traverse the intellectual world; if he is held within invisible chains, fettered with guilt, and tyrannized by his passions*?

Instead therefore of insisting upon a topic sufficiently evident of itself, let us proceed to consider briefly, whether this liberty is now a part of our natural inheritance; and, if not, in what way we may acquire it.

1. Whether we place moral virtue in a conformity to the reason and fitness of things, or to the truth of things, or to their intrinsic worth and excellence; it will appear that the bulk of mankind are without the im-

* The above remark was perhaps never more strikingly exemplified than in the late M. de Voltaire, whose versatility of genius could pass with facility and vigour from poetry to mathematics, from history to philosophy, from physics to metaphysics: this, however, although it gave variety and extent to his intellectual acquisitions, rendered them superficial and trifling, by preventing a regular and steady application to any one subject. Every difficulty apparently giving way before him, he seems to have satisfied himself with the idea of what he *could* have accomplished, and to have assumed the praise of genius, without attaining the reality of knowledge.

mediate power of thus conforming their actions, and consequently without moral liberty.

God, as Creator, is the absolute proprietor of the universe, and has a right to do what he will with his own; as possessed of infinite perfection, he alone is qualified to govern the world he has created: if we combine this right and fitness, we shall arrive at an adequate ground for an unlimited and voluntary submission to the divine authority and administration.

What can be more fit and reasonable, or more according to the truth of things, than to bow to his dominion whose property we are, and from whose power it is impossible to escape; whose perfection should lead us, even though we were naturally independent, to place ourselves in subjection to him, as the only way to attain the highest dignity and felicity of our nature? Wherein does true virtue consist, but in rating things as they are, in valuing every thing according to its real worth, and consequently involving in it an unlimited regard to that Being whose excellence is infinite?

Such a regard is undoubtedly required from us, and from the whole intelligent creation, upon every principle of reason and fitness, of truth and excellence, of duty and interest. Yet how little this is rendered by men in general, and how little they are immediately capable of rendering it, will be evident upon a very slight examination.

No proud man has the present power thus to regard his Maker, any more than he has the power instantly to assume a spirit of humility and dependance. He who has been accustomed to indulge his own will and humour, is in no immediate capacity of freely sacrificing both to the will of another, and of submitting all his thoughts, words, and actions to divine control. He who has been used to do homage to himself, and perhaps to receive it from others, has no proximate power voluntarily to abase himself before the holiness and majesty of God, in whose presence all creatures are as nothing, and sinful creatures worse than nothing. Every proud man is therefore morally a slave, without the power of doing that

which it is morally fit and right he should do.

The man of pleasure labours under the same wretched impotency. He is at liberty to pursue the gratifications of sense, to chase the fading beauties of the world, and perhaps to seize various forms of excellence in art and nature; but he is not at liberty for spiritual enjoyments, to taste the refined pleasures of devotion, or to delight in the perfections of the divine nature. His wings are clipt, he can only flutter round the earth, and has no power of soaring aloft,

"To the first good, first perfect, and first fair."

Men devoted to wealth have, if possible, still less capacity to perceive the beauty, or to feel the obligation of true religion and virtue; such is their degradation, that they are often looked down upon with contempt even by their fellow-slaves, as the low drudges of the world, and as utterly devoid of every noble and generous sentiment.

We may therefore conclude, that the bulk of mankind are without the present power of preferring, actually and in prac-

tice, the excellence and felicity of virtue, to the riches, the pleasures, and the pride of the world; consequently, that they are destitute of true moral liberty, and are slaves in the most deplorable sense.

Of this state of bondage the wiser heathens appear to have had some obscure notion, derived from tradition, which they dressed up after their own fancy. Plato represents the soul as originally winged, and flying through the heavens in the train of Jupiter and the gods; and at certain seasons he supposes her to have been admitted into some super-celestial region, where she contemplated truth, virtue, and justice, in their source. Thus, he says, she continued inexpressibly happy, till neglecting to accompany the chariot of Jupiter, being seduced by her passion for Nectar and Ambrosia, she lost her wings, fell to the earth, and was sunk into the body*. Could Plato have told us how she might recover her wings, and again mount aloft to the banquet of the gods, he would have told us what we are principally con-

* See Plato's Phædrus.

cerned to know, but what is only taught in the school of Christ. Even Porphyry, who was so determined a foe to the christian religion, and so perfectly acquainted with the most refined and mysterious doctrines of paganism, says, " he had not learned that any universal method of liberating the soul, had yet been discovered by the wisdom of philosophy*."

2. Let us then endeavour to relieve this darkness of philosophy by the light of revelation.

All beings, in their original state, were perfect in their kind, without the least defect, moral or physical. After the formation of man, God is represented as looking down upon his works with complacency, and pronouncing them *very good*, as answerable to the great idea that existed in his own eternal mind. Man more eminently bore the image of his Maker, and approached him with filial delight and confidence. Thus was he constituted in honour and happiness, but he *continued not;* he soon incurred the

* See Aug. de Civit Dei. Lib. x. cap. 32.

divine displeasure by his disobedience, and exposed himself and his posterity to known and unknown evils.

In this state of ruin, God again looked down upon man, and looked down in mercy as well as judgment. In the sentence pronounced upon the tempter was conveyed an intimation of favour to the human race, through the *seed of the woman;* by which *seed* we are authorized, from subsequent revelations, to understand Jesus the Son of God.

What would have been the future destiny of man, or whether he would have been brought into existence at all, had not a gracious provision been made for his recovery upon the foresight of his lapse; as it hath not, that I know of, been expressly revealed, it would seem to me presumption in any man to determine. God himself only can tell what it would have become him to do in a conjuncture which never existed, and which was never intended to exist.

What concerns us to be acquainted with, is our present actual situation; that we no

longer stand before God upon the ground of creation but of redemption; that all the help and hope of which we participate, is derived to us only through a Mediator; and that as we improve or neglect our advantages, we shall be dealt with in the final judgment.

If, therefore, every good which now is derived to man is in virtue of the mediation of Christ, then *moral liberty*, which is a principal one, must flow to us in this channel. In vain would you expect to find it in the *Stoa*, or the *Lyceum*, in the groves of the *Academy*, or the gardens of Epicurus; or in any of our modern and improved schools of deism and legislative philosophy. The gospel contains the only scheme, and is the only proclamation of true liberty that the world was ever acquainted with; a liberty from guilt and tyrannic passions; a liberty to obey the laws of piety, and the dictates of uncorrupted nature; a liberty beyond all others to be welcomed with cordial gratulations. When the Greeks were restored to the enjoyment of their ancient laws and immunities by the Roman general

Flaminius, their acclamations, as Plutarch tells us, were heard out at sea, and the birds, which were passing at the time, stunned with the noise, dropped down in the midst of the assembly, who unanimously hailed Flaminius as the saviour and defender of Greece. Yet how trivial was this proclamation of the proconsul, compared with that made by the Saviour of the world, when, in the synagogue of Nazareth, he stood up and read from the prophet Isaias, *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord**. Were these tidings universally published, and duly credited, the whole world could not fail to unite in acclamations of gladness.

As nothing so much dignifies our nature as moral liberty, we might chiefly expect to find it among those, who, by their rank in

* Luke, ch. iv. ver. 16. 21.

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society, are taught to aspire after whatever is laudable and excellent. Yet such an expectation is not justified by fact; neither the abodes of splendor nor of greatness, neither courts nor senates, have hitherto been the favourite haunts of that freedom, which implies an exemption from the power of sensuality, avarice, and ambition.

It is however the glory of christianity, that it can liberate the mind in all exterior circumstances; in the highest elevation of power and fortune, and in the lowest condition of bondage. Daniel displayed this nobility of spirit amidst all the fascination of worldly greatness, when seated next the imperial throne; he displayed too the same spirit in a den of lions. Paul and Silas, when thrust into prison at Philippi, and fastened in the stocks, by singing praises to God at midnight, showed that no shackles could bind the inner man*. And how superior to king Agrippa does the former appear, when, pleading his cause before him, he uttered this fervent wish: *I would to God,*

* Acts, chap. xvi.

that not only thou, but all who hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds !* And at this day, among those highly-injured Africans, whose civil emancipation has of late been so nobly attempted, some, we have reason to believe, by the spread of the gospel among them, are emancipated from the thraldom of sin, and made denizons of heaven. Whether this be always the case with their oppressors, or even with their advocates, is a point which may deserve their most serious consideration. Certainly, whoever has a heart to tyrannize over the meanest of his fellow-creatures, must forfeit every claim to the dignity of moral freedom. Nor has a patriot much to boast of his superior character, if, while he promises liberty to others, he himself is a slave of depravity; such a patriot, preaching political freedom in chains of moral bondage, is just the reverse of Paul the apostle.

It is only in the kingdom of God that a spirit of liberty is universal, and runs through

* Acts, chap. xxvi.

every rank of subordination. Even the enslaved negro, (as now observed) if a subject of this kingdom, is free in the most exalted sense, by holding, as it were, *in capite*, under the great Lord of the universe.

If such then be the ennobling nature of moral liberty; if, with it, the most oppressed African is free, and, without it, the freest Briton is a slave; let the reader be persuaded to use every endeavour to secure its possession, by becoming a subject of that kingdom where alone it can possibly exist.

SECTION V.

The Influence of Civil Government on Virtue and Happiness, from the Relation it bears to Property.

ANOTHER principal object of government is *property*; while this is left unprotected, and open to depredations, society can never rise above a savage state; no flocks and herds will be reared, no lands will be cultivated, no regular provision will be made for the supply of human wants. It is only a secure enjoyment of what is acquired, that will stimulate industry, and quicken invention; that will accumulate stock, and produce those various arts that are necessary to the existence and order of civil life.

In this progress of society from rudeness to refinement, it may be proper to consider three periods, and the aspect that each of them bears upon virtue and happiness. The first will detain us little; the two latter will demand a more particular attention.

I. *On the period preceding the full establishment of laws, or of any regular means of human subsistence.*

Little need be said to show the discouragements that lie in the way to virtue and happiness during this period.

Let us suppose a number of colonists to plant themselves in a country that is barren or uncultivated, where the labour of many years would be necessary, before they could sit down without solicitude for the next day's provision; and where as many years more must be added, before they could settle a system of laws and regulations adapted to their present circumstances. It is evident that such a state of insecurity and anxious toil, while it threatened the utter extinction of a feeble virtue, would put the most confirmed and vigorous to a severe trial. Nor is it less obvious, that such a situation would be equally unfavourable to true enjoyment.

What is here asserted in a particular case, must hold true of political communities in general, previous to the complete establishment of laws and government, and before labour is provided with fit materials and

instruments, and distributed into its proper channels. For the truth of this, were it not sufficiently evident of itself, we might appeal to the testimony of universal history.

II. The second period is, *When the mass of citizens are able to provide comfortably for themselves and families by moderate labour, and not without it; and when those of a superior rank are neither by their number nor wealth of sufficient influence to disturb this system of mediocrity.*

It has been observed in a former section that no political skill can permanently raise a society above the necessity of moderate labour in the bulk of its members*. This is so far from being a circumstance to be regretted, that, on the whole, it is highly favourable to the cause of virtue and happiness, to which few things are more adverse than the want of regular occupation; an

* If there be any exceptions to this, they can only be found in a few highly-favoured climates, where nature furnishes almost of herself all that is needful for human subsistence.

men, swayed as they are by pleasure and pride, together with no small portion of indolence, cannot be expected to mark out such occupation for themselves, especially if it be of a kind both humble and laborious (the species that is often most wanted) unless compelled by the exigency of their situation.

All, therefore, that the best government can reasonably intend, is to preserve its subjects from the necessity of that excessive toil which wastes the health, exhausts the spirits, discourages virtue, and renders life cheerless and uncomfortable; and to promote every measure that may secure a willing and moderate exertion, and leave the mind at sufficient liberty to attend to its own peculiar and most important interests.

Further, let it be observed, that the kind, as well as the degree of labour, under the above system of mediocrity, is favourable to virtue and virtuous enjoyment. For, in this state of things, there would be no demand, or none to produce any sensible effect, for such curiosities or luxuries, in dress or diet, in houses or equipage, as tended to

corrupt the imagination, and excite the envy of those who were employed to provide them; and so to render them discontented with their own present situation. On the contrary, the business of the labouring classes would be to supply the simple wants of nature, or those modest conveniences, with which the proudest of their fellow-citizens, and their fathers before them, were used to be satisfied.

It is not meant, however, by what is now advanced, that every one should be engaged in manual occupations, or in such as are of primary necessity; which, even in a small nation, might be inexpedient or impracticable. For suppose such a nation, planted in some favourable climate, where one half of them was sufficient to provide for the physical wants of the whole; of the other half, but a small proportion could properly be employed as physicians, philosophers, lawyers, or divines; and unless some new occupations be struck out to preserve the rest from idleness, distressing must be the condition, and probably short the duration of this little state. It is enough, therefore,

if no member of a body politic be left unemployed in one way or other, innocently as to himself, and with some advantage to his fellow-citizens.

Such employment is one of the greatest political objects: where this is duly provided for, where every citizen is usefully and honestly engaged, or, in other words, where idleness is excluded, and the arts of luxury are unknown, all must tend to individual and general good.

Whether any people was ever placed precisely in this happy mediocrity, or whether it is an effect within the reach of human policy, may fairly be questioned. It is however certain, that in the progress of nations from barbarism to refinement, there is a point of nearest approach to this middle condition; and that to note when society has arrived at this point, *there* to arrest its progress and fix its station, or, if this cannot be effected, to hang upon its wheels, that its further advance may be as little and as slow as possible, is a design worthy the best attention, and the best efforts of the legislator, the patriot, or the philosopher.

III. *On the third and last period, when the number of rich citizens constitutes a considerable part of the community.*

(1.) We have shown in the introduction to this work, that the love of pleasure, the love of consequence, and the love of wealth, are the three great principles which rule in the bulk of mankind; with this difference, that wealth, although sometimes sought on its own account, is mostly regarded in subserviency to the two former objects, or as it encourages and promotes the pride and indulgences of life. In what respects it does this, may appear from the following reflections.

1. As a man's consequence in the world much depends on the figure he makes in it, he will commonly be disposed to make the best he can. A tradesman who begins to thrive in his business, will display his growing fortune by his personal appearance, and by the improvement of his house and furniture; if he goes on to prosper, he will increase the number of his servants, set up his carriage, provide himself with a retreat in the country, some *ferme ornée*, or elegant

villa, with well-stored gardens and ornamented grounds; and at length, perhaps, with almost a princely income, will withdraw himself entirely from mercantile affairs, and, if recommended by a little address and education, may find admission into the higher circles of society, and there form new connections and alliances. A like accession of wealth in any other way, will furnish out a similar career, and conduct to the same splendid distinctions to which others succeed by inheritance. All this must be observed by every one who at all looks abroad into the world, and, by an equitable judge, will be observed without a monkish or a republican severity. But however it may be granted, that in the advanced stages of society, a difference of rank, whether acquired or hereditary, with answerable outward distinctions, may be necessary to the maintenance of social order, and that such distinctions imply inequality of fortune, we must still lament, that this inequality is so often perverted from its proper use, to gratify a spirit of pride, or to the indulgence of a vain parade.

2. Another effect of wealth is dissipation and amusement, especially among the nobility and gentry of a country. Persons of this rank being bred to no business, and, in general, I fear, unprovided with any great store of knowledge or learning; unformed to habits of application, or to the steady pursuit of any useful or laudable object; must almost inevitably be given up to a scattered and dissipated life. Plays and operas, balls and assemblies, gambling and horse-racing, with other empty and boisterous pastimes, will probably occupy their chief attention. Or, if there is any one who happens to be cast in a finer mould, to be endued with a taste for the polite arts or the *belles lettres*, he is likely to saunter away the day in some gallery of painting or statuary, antique or modern; in inspecting the cabinets of the curious, and other similar exhibitions; and to pass his evening, unless occasionally engaged at a concert or at the theatre, in something that he supposes to be literate or philosophical conversation. And should there yet remain a listless interval, he will probably fill it up

with some sentimental volume which requires no attention, and yields no instruction; or, at best, which has in it more of taste or delicacy, than of solidity or argument. That this, in the main, is a just description, I think few of my readers will deny; and it is willingly admitted that there are many noble and honourable exceptions.

What is here said of the higher orders of society is proportionably true of all the rest. Wherever there is wealth, there will be dissipation. There are few opulent merchants or tradesmen so deeply engaged in their shop or their counting-house, as not to find time for amusement beyond what is necessary for mere relaxation. And after they have entirely withdrawn from business, their amusements will multiply of course, although their habits of employment, by leading them to agriculture, or some other practical object, may seldom suffer them to lapse totally into a dissipated life.

3. Again: Wealth is almost sure to be attended with a proportionable degree of

sensual gratification. It requires no proof, that, as riches accumulate, men are generally disposed to allow a larger scope to a wanton and capricious appetite. They will spread their tables, not only with superfluous abundance, but also with increasing variety and curiosity; and sometimes to a degree of extravagance, as if they meant to emulate that luxurious prince, who, to humour his palate, would provide himself with the tongues of singing birds, and the brains of pheasants, would eat no fish when he happened to be near the sea-coast, and no flesh at a distance from it; as if he thought that fare still the best which was most scarce or costly*. I am aware that this might as well arise from vanity as from a surfeited appetite; and should any one choose to resolve it into the former, it would yet serve to illustrate our general argument. A similar progress may be observed in other cases of animal indulgence. Instead of floors of bare earth, or covered with straw or rushes†, we come gradually to tread on

* Lampridius in vitâ Heliog.

† "The strewing a floor with straw or rushes was com-

warm and elegant carpets, and to stretch ourselves on beds of down instead of straw-pallets, with a log of wood for a bolster*.

mon in Queen Elizabeth's time, not excepting even her presence chamber." Lord Kaimes' *Sketches of the History of Man*, vol. i. p. 326.—"An old tenure in England binds the vassal to find straw for the king's bed, and hay for his horses." Id. vol. ii. p. 122.

* Holingshed, who wrote in the reign of Elizabeth, has the following passage in the preface to his history. "There are old men yet dwelling in the village where I remain, which have noted two things to be marvellously altered in England within their sound remembrance. One is the multitude of chimnies lately erected; whereas, in their young days, there were not above two or three, if so many, in most uplandish towns of the realm. The second is, the great amendment of lodging: For, said they, our fathers, and we ourselves, have laid full oft upon straw-pallets, with a good round log under their head instead of a bolster. If it were so that the father, or the good man of the house, had a mattress or flock bed, and thereto a sack of chaff to rest his head upon, he thought himself to be as well lodged as the lord of the town: so well were they contented. Pillows, said they, were thought meet only for women in childbed." In this last opinion they have been followed at a much later period in the northern part of this island, if we may credit the following anecdote told by Lord Kaimes: "A knot of islanders," says he, "benighted, wrapped themselves up in their plaids, and lay down in

Instances of grosser and more licentious indulgence I forbear to specify; as I have no mind to paint out scenes of low debauchery, to trace the haunts of lewdness and prostitution, or to dwell on evils, which, in the present circumstances of the world, are, I fear, more to be lamented than remedied.

All these effects are much heightened by competition, in that state of society now under review; in which the opulent part of a nation is supposed to bear a considerable proportion to the whole. In this case, one rich citizen will vie with another in every form of ostentatious splendour and luxurious gratification.

Further: When a state is arrived at this point of wealth and refinement, its rich and pampered citizens will lay out for foreign

the snow to sleep. A young gentleman, making up a ball of snow, used it for a pillow. His father (Sir Evan Cameron) striking away the ball with his foot, What, Sir, said he, are you turning effeminate?" This, indeed, is carrying the doctrine of indulgence to a point of rigour that would scarce be required in the *hospice* of St. Bernard.

luxuries. After they have exhausted their own country, they will look to remote climes for fresh accessions; men-singers and women-singers will be imported to delight the ear; and every delicacy of land and water will be procured to regale the palate; and earth and sea be ransacked to obtain some new indulgence to their pride or pleasure. How far all this may contribute even to their present enjoyment is extremely dubious; and no one will suppose that it can be of use to improve their virtue.

(II.) If we turn our view to the effects of wealth on the lower orders of society, we shall find them correspondent to those we have now described.

1. As wealth creates new wants, more labour will be required to satisfy them, and its rewards will be proportionable to the demand. Many trades and handicrafts will be promoted, which in other circumstances would languish, or have no existence. And so far as this goes to furnish employment to such as before had none, or none sufficient for their subsistence; or to enable a sober industrious citizen a little to improve his

style of living, or, with less anxiety, to live in the same style to which he had been accustomed; and, in addition to this, to lay up something against future contingencies; no man, who is not of more than ordinary severity, will consider such a result as either morally or politically injurious.

2. Other effects in this advanced stage of society are less favourable. Many who are raised above their former mediocrity, or *that* condition of life in which they lived comfortably with moderate labour, will find it to their manifest detriment; as hereby they will be tempted, either to waste a part of their time in idle indulgence, (which is the case of many of our artizans at present, who in four days can earn the reward of six) or to raise their stated mode of living beyond what they are able to support. And these evils will be increased by the contagious example of those above them; for though luxury begins, it will not long be confined among the higher orders; from the first it will descend to the second, till at length it reaches the labouring classes. Their wants will thus grow more numerous;

what before was a luxury, will be counted a necessary; and whilst their means of living are augmented, the real ease and comfort of life will be diminished.

3. May I be allowed further to observe, that these consequences may become still more aggravated by a successful foreign commerce. It is true, that, by a constant influx of riches into a country, which will be the case while the balance of trade continues in its favour, a poor nation may be raised to that state of mediocrity we have before described; but here the good effects will cease. Should a sudden flow of wealth elevate the major part of it a step higher, it can only be (as formerly remarked) for a short season; some will grow idle; others, having just tasted the intoxicating cup of luxury, will contract new wants much faster than they will be able to supply them; besides, a sufficient number of labouring poor would not be left behind to perform the necessary drudgery of life, which those, therefore, who had lately raised themselves a degree above them, must either do for

themselves, or pay down a price for it, which might soon reduce them to their former level, if not below it. Lastly, should the commercial balance turn against the country, the consequences might be yet more distressing; such a shock could hardly fail to throw multitudes out of employment, labour would have to find out new channels, many private fortunes might be subverted, and the very existence of the state be brought into danger.

Hence it may appear, first, that a perpetually increasing commerce ultimately tends to depress the mass of a people beneath mediocrity, however it may elevate the fortunes of individuals; and, secondly, that in respect to manners, its effect is to corrupt a virtuous country, however it may serve to civilize and improve a barbarous one*.

What then shall we think of that policy

* Le commerce corrompt les mœurs pures; cétoit le sujet des plaintes de Platon: il polit et adoucit les mœurs barbares, comme nous le voyons tous les jours.

MONTESQ. Espr. des loix. Liv. xx. ch. 1.

which would grasp the trade of the world, and in its expansive views, overlooking that system of mediocrity which is the natural seat of virtue and true enjoyment, would let in upon a country an overflow of riches, which is sure to be followed by luxury, with all its mischievous consequences? Yet to establish a better policy, in the latter periods of a great and commercial nation, without giving a check to its industry, and impairing those resources that are necessary to its very existence, may be a matter of much difficulty.

But though a complete reform in this case might exceed the utmost human efforts, yet something might be done: though it might be impossible to call back the political sun to the meridian, after it was passed, his further descent might be retarded. By heavy imposts on luxury its progress might be checked, and many of its pernicious effects diminished. A multitude of hands might be recovered to agriculture and useful manufactures, that are now retained by the more opulent citizens in vicious indul-

gence, or that are engaged in occupations which minister only to curiosity, or luxurious gratification *; a vast quantity of surface that is now consumed by superfluous horses, might be converted to the growth of corn, or the pasturing of those flocks and herds which contribute so largely to our clothing and sustenance; and such a proportionate tax might be laid on property, as would confine it within limits more consistent with the general welfare, and produce a present sensible relief to the national burdens. The utility of these or similar measures must be easily discerned; and there wants nothing but public spirit both to discern and to carry them into execution. But this want is all. —It is for want of this, that a great nation may proceed from one excess to another,

* "Perhaps two-thirds of the manufactures of England are employed upon articles of confessed luxury, ornament, or splendor; in the superfluous embellishment of some articles which are useful in their kind, or upon others which have no conceivable use or value; but what is founded in caprice or fashion."

PALEY's Mor. and Pol. Phil. vol. ii. p. 369.

till at length it arrive at a period when it can neither endure its diseases nor their remedies*.

* "Labente paulatim disciplinâ, velut desident esprimò mores—deinde magis magisque lapsi—tum ire cæperint præcipites—*donce ad hæc tempora, quibus nec vitia nostra, nec remedia pati possumus, perventum est.*" LIV. Hist. lib. 1. initio.

SECTION VI.

In which it is considered, how far the favourable Aspect of Wealth on the liberal Arts and Sciences, may be urged in Abatement of what has been advanced in the last Section.

IT may probably here be alleged, that it is hardly fair to insist on the allowed tendency of wealth to produce pride, dissipation, and sensual indulgence, with an innumerable train of low and vicious arts; and not to consider, on the other side, its happier tendency to promote those more liberal arts and sciences, which refine the taste, enlarge the understanding, and improve the moral character. Let us then enquire, for a moment, into the force of this allegation.

That the fine arts cannot flourish without the fostering hand of riches is granted. Men, till they are provided with the necessaries and the principal conveniences of life,

are not disposed to look out for its elegances; and what meets with little encouragement can make but little progress. No great artist was ever produced among a horde of savages, nor during that first period of a community when it was struggling for establishment.

It is true also, that, by cultivating the arts in question, a just and quick perception of natural fitness and proportion, of harmony and beauty, is formed; nor can it be denied, that natural excellence bears some analogy to moral, and will suggest it to a mind duly disposed; or, if you please, that they are *species* under the same *genus* of ORDER*; the one consisting in a just arrangement and harmony of lines and figures, the other of human dispositions and actions. But then, let it be remembered, that these are species so remote from each other, that men the most exquisitely alive to artificial and natural beauty, are often insensible to the charms of true virtue, which, if rightly

* "Definitio brevis et vera virtutis, ordo est amoris."
ST. AUSTIN.

discerned, would, according to a sentiment of Plato, kindle in the soul an incredible delight and admiration.

Of this little sympathy which subsists between virtue and the fine arts, we have a striking example in the ancient Greeks, who, at the very period when they were most highly distinguished for the latter, are known to have been so entirely lost to a just *moral* sense, as to expose their children, lend out their wives, and to indulge unnatural lusts; and at Corinth, in particular, a temple is said to have been erected to Venus, with more than a thousand courtezans there devoted to her service*. Which shows that the corruption of their morals kept at least equal pace with their polite accomplishments; and that virtue and the fine arts are not so closely allied as some would fondly imagine †.

* "Dans aucune ville on ne porta si loin les ouvrages de l'art.—Elle erigea un temple à Venus, où plus de mille courtesanes furent consacrées."

MONTESQ. Esp. des loix. Liv. xxi. ch. 7.

† Thus Lord Shaftesbury speaks of the Arts and Virtues as "mutually friendly;" and of the "science

It is not however to be denied, that a good may be a great artist, and that his art may contribute to the promotion of virtue. He may teach the canvass or the marble to inspire just and noble sentiments, and by transmitting durable monuments to the honour of such who have deserved well of mankind, may excite posterity to a laud-

of Virtuosos, and of Virtue itself, as, in a manner, one and the same*." And Dr. Turnbull, in his Christian Philosophy, p. 175, tells us, "It might be shown that the taste of beauty in architecture and the other ingenious arts, is so analogous to, and connected with, a good taste of beauty and harmony in moral conduct, that if one who hath the former is irregular and dissolute in his morals, he must be so in downright contradiction to the *sole* principle upon which his delight in the ingenious arts and works of taste is founded." To these permit me to add another passage from Lord Kaimes to the same effect: "Thus," says he, "taste goes hand in hand with the moral sense in their progress towards maturity, and they ripen equally by the same sort of culture†" Such ideas of *moral virtue* may probably remind some of my readers of the story of the man who, being born blind, thought a scarlet colour was like the sound of a trumpet.

* See his Advice to an Author.

† Sketches on Man, vol. i. p. 197.

able emulation. All this is possible, and perhaps not without example.

II. If the fine arts can only flourish in the advanced stages of society, the same must hold equally true of the sciences, which certainly stand no less in need of encouragement. We could no more reasonably expect to meet with an able mathematician or astronomer among the Hurons or the Iroquois, than with an exquisite painter or statuary.

And as the sciences are thus related to the fine arts in their origin, so they too much resemble them in their want of moral influence and effect. That they contribute to the wealth and aggrandisement, to extend the commerce, to augment the power, and spread far and wide the renown of a nation, cannot be disputed. But all this is extremely different from contributing to its moral prosperity, or to its virtue and virtuous enjoyments. To be convinced how little these important objects, without some great and previous change in the state of the world, are likely to be promoted by any extraordinary advances in human science

and learning, we need only cast an eye on those periods when they most flourished. The *first* is that of Socrates, already mentioned, when Greece was at once the distinguished seat of literature, of arts, and of every species of moral depravity. The *second* has been marked by the title of the *Augustan* age, when, soon after the introduction of the Grecian philosophy into Italy, Rome lost her liberties, and every virtue for which she had been long renowned. The *third* is that of *Leo* the Tenth, a period, though abandoned to superstition and every vicious disorder, in which learning again revived after a slumber of many ages, and probably, in part, paved the way, and furthered the progress, of the reformation. I say *in part*, for there are other and more powerful causes, both political and moral, (not here to be enumerated) to which this great event is chiefly to be ascribed. The *last period* has been styled *the age of Lewis the Fourteenth*, when, under the patronage of that monarch, and amidst bigotry, persecution, war, lewdness, and court-intrigue, the sciences as well as the fine arts made a rapid

progress in France; and at the same time in England, under the reign of Charles the Second, in the midst of profaneness, plots, persecution, and every kind of low debauchery. We see, then, that in each of these periods, vice and profligacy flourished together with human learning; and, if we except the era of the reformation, received from it no sensible check or counteraction. And as to what is called *modern philosophy*, how far it has a tendency to promote the virtue and happiness of mankind, we may with probability judge from those dire effects of its influence which are yet fresh in our memories:—the extinction of religion, both natural and revealed;—the dissolution of every bond of social union;—the destruction of kings;—the subversion of nations;—and the reign of atheism and anarchy.

Let it not be misunderstood, as if it was here meant to cast an indiscriminate censure on human learning, which would be as unjust in itself, as it would be alien and remote from the writer's intention. Far be it from him to disparage any useful branch of knowledge, or to confound that genuine

and experimental philosophy, which serves to unfold the wisdom and goodness of the Creator in the structure and destination of his works, and to supply many solid advantages to the world, with a *science falsely so called*, or with that miserable sophistry, which is the disgrace, and has proved the sorest calamity of the present age. Or, as if it was meant to censure any ingenious art, while it maintains its proper rank, and seeks to improve in adorning human life, by ministring in the cause of virtue and religion.

It must not however be forgotten, that while the philosopher and the artist are mindful to perform their part, we must take care on ours, if we mean to profit by their labours, to be provided with a mind sound and well-constituted, both morally and intellectually:—*Then* all things will contribute to our improvement; every excellence of art, as well as every discovery of nature, will lead to the great source of truth and perfection; shadows will teach realities, and creation become a mirror of the Deity. At present our condition, as not unaptly

conceived by an ancient philosopher*, resembles that of men chained down from their infancy in a cavern, with their backs towards the light, and thus left to contemplate the figures projected upon the sides of their prison, mistaking them for the real objects.

Man in this shadowy state is fond of shadows, and turns his back upon the world of realities. He will dwell with rapture on the power of Raphael's pencil displaying the histories and characters of scripture, without any regard to the real nature of the things represented; and will speculate with wonder on the earth and visible heavens, which shall soon pass away and be dissolved, while he remains insensible to that world which knows neither time nor change, and to which he stands so nearly related.

The sum is this: That so far as the arts and sciences are of use to set forth the glory of the Creator, as manifested in his works; or to facilitate the means of human subsist-

* See Plat. rep. lib. 7. initio.

ence; or even so far as they bestow on life an agreeable, yet sparing and chaste ornament; and by affording employment, prevent one part of mankind from becoming a burden or a nuisance to the other; they are warranted by the severest policy. But, on the other hand, when we oppose to these advantages, their liableness to be abused, and how commonly they *are* abused, to the purposes of vanity and luxurious indulgence, their utility, on the whole, then becomes not a little uncertain and problematical.

SECTION VII.

On the Savage and Civilized State of Man.

A FEW remarks on the savage and civilized state of man, compared with each other, will conclude this first part of the present work.

Some modern writers have exerted all the force of their genius and eloquence, in attempting to elevate the savage above the civilized state of man. Instead of Greeks and Romans, we hear of Caffres and Esquimaux, of Cherokees and Chickesaws; to these, or to other hordes who are supposed still more entirely under the tuition of uncorrupted nature, we are directed for examples of pure virtue and unmingled felicity.

Whether the indigence and rudeness of savage life is preferable to a wealthy and luxurious state of society, I am not anxious to determine; but it may safely be affirmed,

that there is a middle period which is preferable to either, after a people have emerged from barbarism, and before they have arrived at false refinement.

It is easy for the fancy to invest with borrowed qualities, persons and things with which we are little acquainted. A voyager who touches upon a strange coast, and there beholds a company of the natives seated at their ease under the foliage of some spreading oak or plantain, while others are seen diverting themselves on the lawn with the dance and the song, is ready to imagine himself transported to a paradisiacal region where all is innocence and delight; and should he happen to be received to a hospitable repast, instead of being devoured himself, he will be disposed to requite them with the praise of every virtue that can adorn humanity. To appearances much less flattering than these, we are probably indebted for some late panegyrics upon savage life and manners. We all know how common it is for men, especially for travellers, out of mere vanity to embellish

their narratives; and we may know too, that there are not wanting some, who will both embellish and invent, from a malignant design of exalting nature at the expence of christianity.

To counteract the ill effect of such fictions, which are the more dangerous as they are countenanced and supported by men who have too long passed under the guise of philosophers; I would oppose the authority of the celebrated and unfortunate navigator M. de la Perouse, who was sent out by the French government on a voyage of discovery, and appears to have been eminently qualified for such an enterprise. "Philosophers," says he, "write books in their closets, while I have been engaged in voyages during a course of thirty years. I have been a witness to the injustice and deceptions of these people (savages) whom they have described to us as so good, because they are very near to a state of nature.—It is not possible to form society with man in a state of nature, because he is barbarous, deceitful, and wicked. In this opinion I have

been confirmed by my own melancholy experience*"

In illustration of this remark, I subjoin his account of an island in the South Sea, named *Maouna,* where every appearance of a paradisiacal state of innocence and enjoyment, was completely contradicted by a closer observation. "This charming country," says he, "combines the advantages of a soil fruitful without culture, and of a climate which renders clothing unnecessary. The trees that produce the bread-fruit, cocoa-nut, banana, guava, and the orange, supply abundance of wholesome food, while the fowls, hogs, &c. which live on the surplus of these fruits, afford an agreeable variety of viands. They were so rich, and had so few wants, that they disdained our instruments of iron, and our cloth, and asked only for beads.—They had sold at our market more than two hundred wood-pigeons, which would eat out of the hand, and a number of beautiful turtle-doves and

* Voyage round the World, by *de la Perouse,* vol. ii. p. 132.

paroquets equally tame. What cold imagination could separate the idea of happiness from so enchanting a place? These islanders, said we, a hundred times over, are, without doubt, the happiest beings on earth. Surrounded by their wives and children, they pass their peaceful days in innocence and repose; no care disturbs them but that of bringing up their birds; and, like the first man, of gathering, without labour, the fruit that grows over their heads. We were deceived. This delightful country was not the abode of innocence. We perceived indeed no arms; but the bodies of the Indians covered over with scars, proved that they were often at war, or else quarrelling among themselves." And, speaking of their ferocious appearance, he observes: "Nature has no doubt stamped this character on their faces, by way of showing that the half savage, living in a state of anarchy, is a more mischievous being than the most ferocious of the brute creation*."

* Voyage round the world, by *de la Perouse*, vol. ii. p. 72-3.

Crantz, in his History of Greenland, concludes his

We conclude, therefore, notwithstanding all that has been narrated by travellers, sung by poets, or preached by philosophers, that

account of the moral character of the natives in the following manner: "Thus I have thought it requisite, to draw the good and bad side of the character of the Greenlanders, (who are perhaps the most simple and least corrupted of all the heathen nations) and to trace as much as possible the ground and motive of their actions; because the accounts of this nation hitherto published, as well as the splendid description of almost all heathen nations, in ancient or later ages, might almost induce us to think that there were virtuous heathens, who excelled the christians in many respects, and that they were only seduced to the practice of vice by the bad example and temptations of the christians, and by the new and unknown allurements they brought them. From these premises they deduce this conclusion, that men may lead a virtuous life, from the mere light of nature and reason, and do not need the light of the gospel in order to be pleasing to God, and valuable to their fellow-creatures. Every one knows that this is the corner-stone of deism. We also know that many a teacher delights to alledge, without reflecting on the consequences, the examples of the virtuous heathens, as a reproach or excitement to his auditory; which either hath no effect at all, or else this bad one, to strengthen that *Pelagianism* which every man inherits by birth;—and to make people think that the conversion of the heathens is an easy thing, and that the main

man is radically the same in all situations; and that the love of pleasure, the love of consequence, and the love of wealth, where wealth is to be obtained, are naturally his ruling principles; only diversified in their operation according to the various physical and moral circumstances in which he is placed.

For what virtue a savage is distinguished I have yet to learn; unless we will dignify with the name a sullen kind of fortitude, by which he will brave pain and death, and almost justify the rant of the Stoics, that man by discipline may become proof against all external evils*: though this savage stout-

difficulty is, how to instil into them a proper and convictive conception of the divine truths; for as to good behaviour, that will be easy enough, because they have been already accustomed to a virtuous walk and demeanour."—History of Greenland, vol. i. p. 194-6.

Again: "We cannot perceive either in the Greenlanders, or in any other heathen nations we have had a close acquaintance with, that they shun by nature the *greatest vices*."—Ibid. Let this testimony of an honest and good man be impartially considered.

* "Forbear," said an ancient chief of the Iroquois, when his insults had provoked one of his tormentors to

ness has indeed been ostentatiously opposed to the sufferings of christian martyrs, by men who will see no difference between a natural hardiness, supported by the obstinacy of pride, and the power of divine faith and resignation.

Nor am I able to imagine wherein the superior happiness of a savage can consist, unless we choose to place it in his pride of independence. He has no master to serve, or patron to please; he can lie down and rise up, go out and come in, as a lord of the creation, above ceremony and above control. On the other hand, however, it must be remembered, that if he pays no regard to others, they pay as little to him, and that in all the dignity of his condition, he is in constant danger of being left to starve in his hut, or to perish in the desert.

The truth is, man must in some degree

wound him with a knife, "forbear these stabs of your knife, and rather let me die by fire, that those dogs your allies, from beyond the sea, may learn from my example to suffer like men."

ROBERTSON'S Hist. of America, vol. ii. p. 157.

be humanized before he is capable either of science, virtue, or happiness; and he can only be humanized in society; from which should he early be separated, and suffered to run wild in the woods, he would probably soon lose even the rudiments of speech, his ideas would scarce be extended beyond the objects that surrounded him, his powers of reflection would lie dormant, and the human would almost be levelled with brute natures. And in proportion as a savage approaches to this condition, the greater must be his intellectual and moral inability*.

Men who have enjoyed every external advantage are too apt to forget their ob-

* There are many American savages who cannot reckon further than three, and have no denomination to distinguish any number above it. *Robertson*, ibid. p. 91.—There are others, who have no idea even of fire. L'Origine des Loix, &c. par *Goguet*, tom. i. p. 149-53.—"Les habitans des iles Mariannes, decouvertes en 1521—regarderent le feu comme une espece d'animal qui s'attachoit au bois dont il se nourrissoit." Id. ibid. p. 151. And of the ignorance and stupidity of savage nations, in respect to religious and moral subjects, all history bears ample and melancholy testimony.

ligations, and to ascribe to nature, what they owe chiefly to education; to which minds of the greatest powers must be indebted, in their progress from ignorance to knowledge, and from rudeness to refinement. Reason continues long in her infancy, during which she has need of leading-strings; and after she has gained vigour to walk alone, must be supplied with principles on which to proceed, or she will be in constant danger of wandering into error. These principles in natural enquiries she must borrow from the school of experience, and in those which concern religion, from divine revelation.

It is the want of such principles, together with the sluggishness of his faculties*, that retains a savage in his state of rudeness. He needs not only axioms on which to ground his reasonings, but the influence of other minds to excite his own to a proper

* An American savage will lie for days together stretched in his cabin or in the shade, till, roused by hunger, he again sallies forth into the wilderness in quest of prey; thus sharing his time between violent motion and torpid rest.

exertion, and this he cannot find out of cultivated society.

I have sometimes, in crossing an extensive down, met with a shepherd tending his flock in some retired valley, far removed from the busy walks of men; who has appeared in his perceptions not much superior to the animals under his care, nor much better able to express them. And among the peasantry in general, if we examine those who have never been taught the common rudiments of learning, what a scantiness of ideas they discover, what grossness of apprehension, and, of consequence, what unaptness for moral and religious instruction! Whereas in towns enlivened by trade and manufactures, where the inhabitants frequently converse and transact business with one another and with strangers, even the poor and uneducated commonly manifest a share of ability and intelligence, which is rarely to be found in the huts of ploughmen and shepherds: while such as are a little raised above a state of penury, and whose understandings have received a degree of culture, may, perhaps, of all the

various classes of mankind, justly be considered as the most prepared auditors of true wisdom.

When a man's exterior condition falls below a humble mediocrity, when his mind is depressed with poverty and toil, or suspended with anxiety on account of a precarious subsistence, the counsels of reason and religion will commonly be delivered to him in vain. When Moses spake to his brethren in Egypt, they hearkened not to him, *for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage**. Nor is a full estate more propitious to wisdom. In one of the prophets, God is thus introduced as reproaching his people Israel: *I spake unto thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear*†. These, with innumerable instances that come under daily observation, show the propriety of Agur's prayer, *Give me neither poverty nor riches.*

The extremes of learned refinement and unenlightened barbarism are no less unfavourable to the acquisition of true wisdom. The polite scholar, and the philosophic sage, are often found as unqualified

* Exod vi. 9. † Jer. xxii. 21.

subjects of religious teaching as the untutored savage; arising indeed not from literature or philosophy, in themselves, but from that presumption with which they are so apt to swell the mind, and indispose it to that doctrine whose first and last instruction is humility.

Thus every just view of man, whether he is considered in his individual or social capacity, leads us to the famous *apothegm* of the Grecian sage Cleobulus, and which the wise and moderate of every succeeding generation have chosen for their motto—Μέτρον ἄριστον, *a medium is best.* For though mediocrity is not the standard of true virtue, as Aristotle supposed, it is best, however, in respect to those circumstances which relate merely to our present state. Hence the care of government should be to place and secure a people in that situation, in which the fewest individuals possible are in extreme wealth or indigence; and in which the arts and sciences are no further encouraged, than as they are calculated to increase or preserve useful knowledge, to furnish employment, and minister to the real wants or innocent satisfactions of life.

CHRISTIAN POLITICS.

PART II.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION, BOTH TO SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL; WITH REFLECTIONS ON RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS AND TOLERATION.

SECTION I.

On the Importance of Religion, both to Society and the Individual.

SOME late pretended philosophers, in order to set aside the importance of religion, have endeavoured to establish an opinion, that a wise legislation is all that is necessary to make the world virtuous and happy; and, consequently, that all the evils which mankind have hitherto laboured under, are to be ascribed to the fault or imper-

fection of their political institutions. Now, allowing that whatever evils have arisen from bad government are capable of correction by the contrary, still it may be true, that such as made their way into the world, previous to all civil government whatsoever, may require remedies which no human means can provide or apply.

Let us, however, for a moment, listen to these political sages. Virtue, according to their great doctor Helvetius, consists in the knowledge (why not the practice?) of those duties we owe one to another, and therefore supposes the formation of societies. "A man," says he, "born in a desert isle, and abandoned to himself, would remain without vice and without virtue." "What then," he proceeds, "must we understand by the words virtuous and vicious, but actions either useful or injurious to the public *?" The same is held by others of

* "Vertu—consiste dans la connoissance de ce que les hommes se doivent les uns aux autres—elle suppose par consequent la formation des sociétés. Né dans une isle deserte, abandonné a moi-même, J'y vis sans vice et sans vertu—Que faut il donc entendre par ces mots *ver-*

this philosophic school: I shall only subjoin a passage from Raynall: "Since society," he observes, "should be useful to all its members, they ought every one in return to be useful to society: so, to be virtuous is to be useful, and to be vicious is to be useless or hurtful: behold, the sum of morality*." Hence it is but supposing that virtue and vice relate only to society, and that the state of society depends only upon the laws, and the conclusion follows, *That nothing is wanting to reform the world but a wise legislation.*

What such writers mean by being useful to society, we may collect from their ideas of human happiness. "I maintain," says Helvetius, "that man, from his very frame

tueuses et vicieuses? Les actions utiles ou nuisible à la société."

HELV. de l'homme, sect. ii. ch. xvi. (note 9.)

* "Puisque la société doit être utile à chacun de ses membres, il est de la justice que chacun de ses membres soit utile a la société. Ainsi être vertueux, c'est être utile; être vicieux, c'est être inutile ou nuisible. Voila la morale."

RAYN. Hist. Phil. liv. xix. p. 298.

and constitution, is only capable of the pleasures of sense*." Again, "Physical sensibility constitutes man himself, and is the foundation of all that pertains to his being†." Hence he infers, that neither our desires or knowledge can extend beyond the senses. Accordingly, he considers those as the only saints who add to the public stock of sensitive enjoyments by inventing some new pleasure ‡.

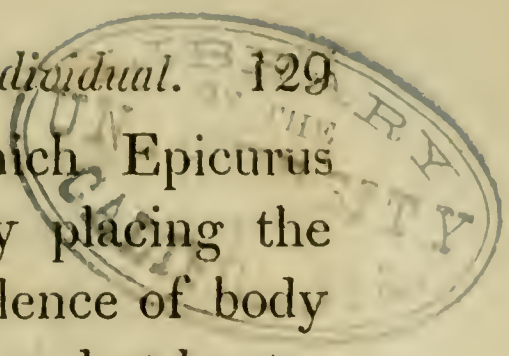
* "Te dis que l'homme, n'etant, par sa nature, sensible qu'aux plaisirs des sens, ces plaisirs, par consequent, sont l'unique objet de ses desirs."

HELV. de l'esprit. disc. iii. ch. x.

† "La sensibilité physique est l'homme lui-même et le principe de tout ce qu'il est. Aussi ses connoissances n'atteignent elles jamais au de-là de ses sens." Id. *de l'Homme*, Recap. ch. ii.

‡ See *de l'Homme*, sect. i. ch. xiii.—What a pity that this sublime philosopher had not the good fortune to have lived under the reign of the Roman emperor *Tiberius*, who might have preferred him to the head of his office, *à voluptatibus* *, in which capacity, by exerting his great genius, he might have added some new pleasure to the imperial stock.

* Novum officium instituit à voluptatibus, præposito equite Romano T. Cæsonio Prisco. *Suetonius* in vitâ. Tib. c. 42.



These are notions at which Epicurus might have blushed, who, by placing the supreme good of man in indolence of body and tranquillity of mind, affected at least a kind of philosophic superiority to mere animal gratifications.

Again: The doctrine of this school, that truth alone is sufficient for regenerating mankind, is certainly new, and worthy of its authors. Philosophers have formerly been used to lament the feebleness of reason, which, when single and unsupported, they found was commonly overborne and trampled under foot amidst the scuffle and tumult of the world. They have lamented that the judgments of men were so much governed by their passions, especially by their interest; of which a witty poet, who wanted the illumination of modern philosophy, thus describes the wonderful power:

> "What makes all doctrines plain and clear?—
> About two hundred pounds a year.
> And that which was prov'd true before,
> Prove false again?—Two hundred more."

Nor have they less lamented the inefficacy of truth, after full conviction, to produce

correspondent practice. Shakspeare, who is supposed to have been tolerably skilled in human nature, and may fairly be reckoned as good a philosopher as many who assume that title, remarks, that "If to do were as easy as to tell what is fit to be done, chapels had been churches, and poor mens' cottages, princes' palaces." "I could sooner," says he, "tell twenty what is fit to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow my own instructions." Poor Shakspeare! he too, it seems, was ignorant of the irresistible efficacy, or, as some choose to speak, the omnipotency of truth.

Should we ask these political prophets, what wonder-working truths they have in commission to reveal? they will tell us, That all men are equal in respect of their rights: that the objects of these rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance of oppression: finally, that the people are the only just source of civil authority. And are these truths, admitting them to be such, of sufficient potency to regenerate man, and restore him to the true dignity of his nature; which neither instruct him in his

origin or end, nor in his situation under the moral government of God, that "most ancient city and polity," as the philosophic emperor speaks*, to whose laws all rational creatures are subject? Our sage legislators should consider this, before they presume to substitute, in the place of religion, their dubious and slippery politics. Before they take upon them to legislate for immortal man, they should learn to extend their views beyond the present stage of existence, and the tragi-comedies that are acting upon it, to a life to come, and the great system of the universe. "The finest gentleman," says a noble author, (and we may affirm the same of the profoundest politician) "must, after all, be considered but as an ideot, who, talking much of the knowledge of the world and mankind, has never so much as thought of the study or knowledge of himself, or of the nature and government of that great public and world whence he holds his *being*:

Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur†."

* Marc. Antonin. lib. ii. sect. 16.

† Shaft. Characteristics, vol. iii. p. 109.

If man besides a present has a future interest, which is infinitely more important; and if religion points out the only way of securing this interest; then that policy which supplants religion, cuts off the best hopes of our nature. But the policy which tells us that to be good citizens is the sum of all our duty to God and man, evidently sets aside the first and great law of religion, which enjoins a supreme regard to the Author of our existence; without which, it teaches us, that whatever be our character in society, we can never be admitted to a participation of the divine favour in a happy immortality. Should, therefore, any government inspire a contempt or neglect of piety, it might justly be considered as an enemy to the true interest of man, though it should elevate a people to the highest pitch of greatness, or place them in any other situation which might better conduce to their temporal enjoyment. All this would prove but a miserable compensation for the danger arising from the example of those above them, which must operate almost irresistibly to the increase of that awful disregard which

is natural to us, of a state and interest which will commence beyond the grave, and extend to eternity.

Nor can the force of this consideration be invalidated, but by the most infallible proof that such a state and interest are groundless fictions; since the bare possibility of their reality, must infinitely outweigh all the good and evil that terminates with this life.

If such then be the malignant aspect of an impious policy upon the spiritual, we cannot reasonably expect it to be very favourable to the temporal welfare of a people, as we have here supposed; but have rather cause to apprehend, that while it endeavours to intercept the view of another world, its counsels in this will be smitten with infatuation; and that the people who are deluded by it, will find themselves deprived at once of the blessings of the present, and the hopes of a better life.

It seems to have been reserved for these unhappy times, whatever may have been conceived before, to have brought forth a scheme so dire and portentous. The late

attempt, in a neighbouring country, to found a government upon atheism, is, I believe, a single instance in the history of mankind. The greatest legislators, in all former ages, have acknowledged the necessity of religion both for the establishment and well-being of civil society *; nay more, have actually

* *Zaleucus* thus prefaces his laws to the *Locrians:* "Every inhabitant, whether of town or country, should first of all be firmly persuaded of the existence of the gods. —Every one ought to labour all he can to become good, both in practice and principle, whereby he will render himself dear and acceptable to God; ought to fear more what leads to ignominy and dishonour, than to loss of wealth and fortune; and to esteem him the happiest citizen who gives up his worldly goods, rather than renounce his honesty and love of justice. But those whose appetites are so headstrong as not to suffer them to be persuaded to these things, and whose minds are turned with a natural bias towards evil, should remember the gods, think upon their nature, and of the judgments they always have in store to inflict upon wicked men." *Charondas*, who flourished about the same time, begins his laws in a similar manner. And among the Romans, Cicero, who in this, as in many other things, copied Plato, introduces his plan of a wise legislation, as follows: "Let every citizen be first of all firmly persuaded of the government and dominion of the gods; that they are the lords and masters of the uni-

ascribed their several institutions to the inspiration of some divinity. Thus *Amasis* and *Mnevis* among the *Egyptians; Zoroaster* among the *Bactrians; Zamolxis* among the *Getes; Rhadamanthus* and *Minos* in *Crete; Romulus* and *Numa* among the *Romans:*

verse; that all things are directed by their power, disposal, and providence; and that the whole race of mankind is in the highest manner indebted to them; that they are intimately acquainted with every one's state and condition; that they know what he does, what he thinks; with what disposition of mind, with what degree of piety, he performs the acts and offices of religion; and that, accordingly, they make a distinction between good and evil men. The mind being embued with these opinions, will never deviate in its determinations from truth and utility."—"That these opinions are useful must be evident to every one who considers what stability is derived to the public from within, by the religion of an oath; and what security it enjoys from without, by the holy rites which accompany national leagues and treaties; how efficacious the fear of divine punishment is to deter men from wickedness; and how venerable and august that society must esteem itself, where the immortal gods themselves are believed to interpose both as judges and witnesses." See *Div. Leg.* vol. i. p. 126-8, and 131-2, where the original passages are added.

"In a word," says Warburton, "there is scarce a legislator recorded in ancient history, but what pretended to revelation and divine assistance*.

Hence then may appear the general conviction of legislative antiquity, concerning the close connection that subsists between religion and government. To which may be added the opinion of a famous modern politician, whose authority in this case may, by some, be thought yet more weighty and

* Div. Leg. vol. i. p. 103.—The same method was practised by the founders of the *great outlying empires*, as Sir William Temple calls them. Thus the founder of the Chinese monarchy was called *Fagfour* or *Fanfour*, *the son of heaven*, (as we are told by the Jesuits) from his pretensions to that relation. The royal commentaries of Peru inform us, that the founders of that empire were *Mango Copac* and his wife and sister *Coya Mama*, who proclaimed themselves the son and daughter of the Sun, sent from their father to reduce mankind from their savage bestial life to one of order and society. *Thor* and *Odin*, the lawgivers of the western Goths, pretended likewise to inspiration, and even to divinity. The revelations of Mahomet are too well known to be insisted on. The race of these inspired lawgivers seems to have ended in *Genghiz-can*, founder of the empire of the Moguls. Ibid. p. 103-4.

decisive. "The rulers of all states," says Machiavel, "whether kingdoms or commonwealths, who would preserve their governments firm and entire, ought above all things to take care, that religion is held in the highest veneration, and that its ceremonies at all times are preserved uncorrupted and inviolate: *For there is no surer prognostic of impending ruin in any state, than for divine worship to be neglected and despised**." On the whole then, we may conclude with a very eminent heathen statesman and philosopher, when, speaking of those who maintained that the gods take no care at all of mankind or their concerns, he observes, that "If their opinion were true, there would be no piety, no sanctity, no religion—that if the gods have no regard to what men do, or what events befal them, there is no reason to pray to them, or wor-

* Political Discourses on Livy, book i. chap. 12.—Again, in the same chapter: "As all things go well where religion is duly supported, so where that is neglected and trampled upon, every thing runs into confusion and disorder." And he elsewhere repeats the same remark.

ship them: and that, if religion and piety be taken away from amongst men, the greatest confusion and disorder would ensue in human life: and, together with piety, mutual fidelity, and the social ties, which bind mankind one to another, and that most excellent virtue, justice, would be banished out of the world *."

But, notwithstanding all that is now advanced respecting the importance of religion to the public welfare, it is still urged by a famous writer, famous for his reading and subtilty †, that even a nation of atheists may live well together in a state of civil society. Now, supposing this to be true, let us again reflect, how hideous would be the spectacle, for a number of immortal beings, immortal in spite of all their sottishness or

* "Sunt enim philosophi et fuerunt, qui omninò nullum habere censerent rerum humanarum procurationem deos. Quorum si vera sententia est, quæ potest esse pietas? Quæ sanctitas? Quæ religio?—Quibus sublatis, perturbatio vitæ sequitur, et magna confusio. *Atque haud scio, an pietate adversùs Deos sublatâ, fides etiam et societas generis humani, et una excellentissima justitia tollatur.*" CIC. de Nat. Deor. lib. i. cap. 2.

† Mr. Bayle.

their sophistry, to occupy or amuse themselves during the short course of this life, without any concern for what may take place beyond it. The more such a society should be found at its ease, the more deeply it was intrenched in political security, and abounding in present gratifications, the more awful would be its situation; war, pestilence, and famine, or, if there be any still sorer calamities that might serve to rouse it to a sense of futurity, would, in the eye of reason, be far less dreadful than to be left to enjoy the present world without fear or disturbance, chanting the Syren song, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!*

The reasoning of the above author, to lessen the connection between religion and the public good, appears to be this: That the fortunes of men depend upon their conduct, and their conduct upon their habits, their passions, and their temperament. But ought he not to have better considered, that religious opinion frequently operates to the formation of the most powerful habits, as well as to weaken and dissolve them; that the passions are influenced by apprehensions

of future, as well as of present, good and evil; and that even the temperament is in some degree subject to the power of religion? Though articles of faith produce not always their full effect, they always produce some effect, they give some impulse to the mind; and, when rightly formed and seconded by action, always generate right affections and habits, and tend to produce a happy temperament of the whole man; consequently must contribute both to individual and general happiness.

But notwithstanding that the sophistry of Bayle is thus easily repelled, the infidel will still return to the charge, and endeavour to set aside the consequence here drawn, by confounding religion with some abject superstition, which degrades the understanding, sinks the courage, and begets a mean and pusillanimous character. And this confusion is the more easy, as religion instructs her disciples to regard with comparative indifference those things which are the great objects of pursuit to others; though, when the cause of truth and the real interests of humaniry are in question, so far

from standing aloof as indifferent spectators, they will be disposed to step forward with alacrity in their just defence; and in support of every measure that may further promote them. Thus (to omit other instances) the heroic piety of the Maccabees rescued the Jewish nation from the Syrian yoke; and, in the opinion of Hume, it is to a set of *fanatics* (an appellation which, in his dialect, means nearly the same as *good christians)* that our own country is indebted for *the whole freedom of its constitution* *.

* Hume's Hist. of England, vol. v. p. 193.—The same author, speaking of our national character under Charles the First, observes, "Never was there a people less corrupted by vice, and more actuated by principle, than the English during that period: never were there individuals who possessed more capacity, more courage, more public spirit, more disinterested zeal. The infusion of one ingredient, in too large a proportion, had corrupted all these noble principles, and converted them into the most virulent poison." Vol. vi. p. 536.—And again, he thus represents a particular party in those times: "Of all christian sects, this [viz. the independent] was the first, which, during its prosperity, as well as its adversity, always adopted the principle of toleration; and it is remarkable, that so reasonable a doctrine owed its origin, not to reasoning, but to the height of extra-

However, though it is highly injurious to represent religion as unfriendly to the real welfare of society, by converting its members into superstitious monks or idle visionaries, I will not assert, with a very eminent writer *, that it naturally tends to political aggrandisement. He thinks that a perfectly virtuous nation (which can only be formed upon the principles of piety) would in a course of ages, according to the ordinary progress of things, obtain the empire of the world. This perhaps may be as great an excess on one hand, as it is on the other to affirm, that such a nation would infallibly fall a prey to external violence or intrigue. As I see nothing in the principles of religion, rightly understood, which forbid a prudent provision for the purpose of just defence, so I can discern nothing in those

vagance and fanaticism:" Vol. vii. p. 21. Such malignant reflections are very similar to that which was cast by the pagans on the primitive christians, and deserves a like censure.—"Bonus vir Caius Sejus, tantum quod christianus—laudant quæ sciunt; vituperant quæ ignorant." TERT. Ap. cap. iii.

* Bishop Butler. See his Analogy, part i. ch. 3.

principles tending to an augmentation of power beyond what such defence may require. A nation such as here supposed, being neither actuated by avarice nor ambition, would naturally be satisfied with a modest supply of its wants, and a reasonable prospect of safety, without seeking to drain the wealth, or acquire the dominion of any other. What would be the effect of its instruction and example, or what particular designs of providence it might accomplish in a course of ages upon the world in general, it is beyond our reach to determine.

This is certain, that the effect of christianity upon every individual who humbly submits to its discipline, is the improvement of his own character in every respect. It teaches him to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; to love good men of every name, and to pity the bad; to fear God, and honour the king: it teaches him in whatever state he is, therewith to be content; and so far from training him up to an indolent and visionary life, it instructs

him to be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; to labour with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him who needeth; laying it down as a fundamental principle of equity, that *if any man will not work, neither should he eat.* In fine, *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise:* these things it urges upon his attention, and enables him to carry into practice.

That such a religion is unfavourable to the real happiness of society; that honesty and industry, virtue and honour, tend to poverty and pusillanimity; is a discovery that was reserved for the present enlightened period. Such a religion, indeed, inspires not a nation with the ambition of conquest; nor, by an undue extension of its commerce, lets in upon it a deluge of wealth and luxury. Forgive it this wrong—and provided it secures every substantial political advantage, and opens to the individual the prospect of a more exalted society hereafter,

let it not be censured, because it gives no encouragement to domineering pride, vain splendor, or luxurious indulgence.

If to this statement of the public influence of religion, any one should object the wars and commotions to which it appears to have given occasion, it may be answered, that this is often little more than appearance; and that the chief cause of these disturbances, as of most others, is worldly ambition and interest; or such a prompt disposition to quarrel, that, were religion entirely out of question, would not fail to find out some other ground or pretext. It may further be replied, that when religion is more immediately the principle of contention, as may sometimes unhappily be the case, it is not religion in its purity, such as it was published by Christ and his apostles, but either some corruption that has mingled with it, or some virulent superstition that can only be ranked under the title of religion, when understood in a very general sense. The natural tendency of uncorrupted christianity is to prevent war, to mi-

tigate its ferocity, and to hasten its termination, by inspiring the benevolent, and controlling the malignant passions; and thus to unite men in the bonds of mutual amity.

It must not, however, be dissembled, that christianity, from the very purity and excellence of its nature, though it can never be the principle, is frequently the occasion of animosity and discord. Christ says, that *he came not to send peace, but a sword;* that *five should be in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.* For though angels at his nativity proclaimed *peace on earth, and good will to men;* though the gospel, which is termed *the gospel of peace,* is a scheme formed by infinite wisdom to bring about an universal pacification; peace with God, peace of conscience, peace in every social and civil relation; and though it infallibly produces these effects in all by whom it is duly received; yet among those who unhappily reject its overtures, whose pride is offended by the humiliating terms it proposes, and their sensual passions by the purity of its precepts, it often occasions keen resent-

ment towards such as, by complying with its requisitions, reflect the guilt and danger of its enemies.

In this war, arising from the opposition of darkness to light, and of vice to virtue, it is the glory of christianity that it admits of no compromise; though it can pity him who wanders from truth, it affords no countenance to his errors; though it can pardon the criminal, it gives no allowance to his vices or his crimes. And what harm can be derived to society from a system, calculated to deliver it from its depravities, both in principle and practice, by holding out the light of truth, and supplying those motives and assistances, without which, for want of personal virtue, no society can be formed either truly great, or of long duration? *Righteousness,* says a wise prince, *exalteth a nation, but sin is the reproach,* and in the end will prove the ruin, *of any people.* And this is true, according to the natural course of things, under the stated government of God, without taking into consideration the extraordinary dispensations of his providence.

If such, then, be the importance of religion, it should certainly be a chief concern of government to do nothing to its prejudice; for as the real good of man is the end of every rational institution, it would be preposterous to consult his temporal at the expence of his future interest. Nor is this negative precaution all that is necessary; as every man is under obligation, by just and lawful means, to do all the good he can; it must be binding upon rulers to promote the cause of true religion in the world, in every practicable way that is allowable in itself, and consistent with the duties of their proper station.

Indeed, to determine what those ways are, and how far they are consistent with the public character of the magistrate, may be often a matter of much difficulty. Many have been, and many now are of opinion, that civil government has nothing to do with religion; that the end of its institution is for temporal purposes only; and that every man, without the least political compulsion or influence, should be left to pursue his spiritual edification, either by his own sepa-

rate endeavours, or by voluntarily associating with others in any way that shall not violate the order and peace of society. But waving, at present, any abstract inquiry, either into the rights of the magistrate, or the rights of conscience, in the concerns of religion, we shall confine our attention to a practical view of the subject; and proceed to a consideration of the consequences and effects; *first,* Of a toleration without an establishment; *secondly,* Of an establishment without a toleration; and, *lastly,* Of an establishment together with a toleration. When this is done, we may be better able to determine, whether in any, or in what degree, religion falls within the jurisdiction of the civil magistrate.

SECTION II.

Of Toleration without an Establishment.

WE shall *first* state what is here meant by *toleration,* and who are the persons understood to be the proper subjects of it; and, *secondly,* we shall consider it in the relation it bears to the progress, together with the political effect of christianity in a country, where there is no ecclesiastical establishment.

I. Toleration has been distinguished by some into *complete* and *partial.* They consider it as *complete,* when a subject, beside the undisturbed profession and exercise of his religion, is admissible to every privilege and office belonging to the civil government; and as *partial,* when he is left under any political incapacity, though he may be permitted to enjoy his religious liberty in the fullest extent. This distinction and expla-

nation, for the sake of perspicuity, we shall here adopt.

The proper subjects of a complete toleration, we understand to be those who can give a reasonable security to the state for their behaviour as good citizens; those who can only give a dubious security, we consider as subjects of a partial toleration; and those who can give *none*, we absolutely exclude from the rank of citizens.

Accordingly, we allow no place in the scale of toleration, either to men who deny those fundamental principles of morality which are necessary to the very existence of society; such, for instance, as bind us to the performance of our engagements, or prohibit any external injury to others: or to professed atheists: or to those who hold the doctrine of intolerance. Not to the first, since it is evident they can give no valid security to the state for their good behaviour, who deny that any such *can* be given; not to the second, because (as Locke observes) promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist; neither to the last,

since it can never be consistent with the public safety to tolerate those who only wait for power and opportunity to tyrannize over others, and deprive them of their most sacred liberties. These are exclusions whose necessity and justice is so apparent, that they are strenuously defended by many of the most zealous champions of freedom; among whom the name of Locke stands highly distinguished.

The question, as it respects the toleration of papists, is not so easily settled. Whether the members of a church which, for nearly a thousand years, has arrogated to itself, besides other dangerous claims, a right of deposing heretical princes, and of releasing their subjects from every bond of allegiance, may be safely admitted, in a protestant state, to a civil equality with the rest of its members, or even to an open profession of their religion, is, at the present period, a point of particular importance, of very difficult consideration, and of hazardous decision. Locke, in his time, thought that popery was no fit subject of toleration; whether it is fitter now, will doubtless be

well weighed by our political rulers, before they take any further steps in its favour. For, notwithstanding that it is regarded by some as an interest ready to die away of itself, it would seem not a little improbable, that an interest which has lived so long, and prevailed so much in the world, should finally expire without some convulsive, or, perhaps, some dreadful struggle. And I cannot forbear, on this occasion, to cite a passage from a French writer, who, though in religion *a lying oracle,* was certainly not wanting in political sagacity: "There is only one case," says he, "in which toleration may become fatal to a country; it is when it tolerates an intolerant religion; and such is the Roman catholic. This religion no sooner obtains the ascendant in a state, than it is sure to shed the blood of its stupid protectors; it is a serpent which stings the bosom which cherishes it. Let Germany be aware of this, as its princes have a particular interest to enter into a communion which offers them large establishments; and when they are become catholic, they will not fail to compel the faith of their

subjects, even by the most violent methods, should gentler ones prove ineffectual. The fires of superstition and intolerance are not yet thoroughly extinguished; a light breath would kindle them afresh, and set Europe in a blaze. Where the conflagration would stop, it is impossible to foretel. Would Holland be sure to escape? Would Great Britain be able from the height of her cliffs to brave the catholic fury? The ocean is but an impotent barrier against fanaticism. What should hinder it from preaching a new crusade; from arming Europe against England; from there striking root, and one day treating the British, as it formerly treated the Albigenses * ?"

* "Il n'est qu'un cas où la tolérance puisse devenir funeste à une nation; c'est lorsqu'elle tolere une religion intolerante: telle est la catholique. Cette religion devenue la plus puissante dans un etat, y repandroit encore le sang de ses stupides protecteurs; c'est un serpent qui piqueroit le sein qui l'auroit réchauffé. Que l'Allemagne y soit attentive! Ses princes ont intèrêt d'embrasser le papisme: il leur offre de grands etablissements pour leurs freres, leurs enfants, &c. Ces princes une fois catholiques, voudront forcer la croyance de leurs sujets; et dussent-ils encore verser le sang humain, ils le feront

May heaven manifest in the event the fallibility of human foresight; and pour down both on papist and protestant such a measure of knowledge and charity, as shall dispose them to lay aside their mutual prejudices and animosities, with whatever is erroneous or corrupt in faith or worship, and unite them in the bonds of truth and peace!

II. Having thus briefly pointed out the nature and limits of toleration, we proceed to consider it in the relation it bears to the *progress*, and next, to the *political effect* of chris-

de nouveau couler. Les flambeaux de la superstition et de l'intolerance fument encore. Un leger souffle peut les rallumer, et embraser l'Europe. Où s'arrêteroit l'incendie? Je l'ignore. La Hollande seroit-elle sûre de s'y soustraire? Le Bréton lui meme pourroit il du haut de sès dunes longtemps braver la fureur du catholique? Le fossé des mers est une barriere impuissante contre le fanatisme? Qui l'empêcheroit de prêcher une nouvelle croisade, d'armer l'Europe contre l'Angleterre, d'y prendre terre, et de traiter un jour les Brétons, comme il traita jadis les Albigeois?"

HELV. ch. 21. *de l'Homme.*—Œuvre posthume.—M. Helvetius, mourut en 1771.

tianity, in a country where there is no ecclesiastical establishment.

It would seem probable in speculation, that the native power of truth was sufficient to ensure its success in the world. "Truth," says Mr. Locke, "would certainly do well enough, if she were once left to shift for herself;" and others speak the same language. But here it is necessary to distinguish between those truths, which, being merely theoretical, are able to make their way by their own evidence; from others, which, from their nearer relation with our interests or passions, will, of course, be more facilitated or obstructed in their progress. An instance or two, in each of these cases, may serve both for proof and illustration.

1. The elements of Euclid need no recommendation or enforcement beside their own evidence; they are sure to find admission into every mind which is not naturally incapable of understanding them; and the same may be asserted of many self-evident or demonstrative truths in other branches of science.

2. Those truths which are concurrent with any passion or interest, of which there are numbers both in morality and politics, will be received with still greater facility. That a servant ought to obey his master, a son his father, or a subject his prince; or that a disobedient servant, an undutiful son, or a rebellious subject, deserves to be punished; are positions whose verity will readily be acknowledged by the parties severally interested, or against whom the offence is committed. In general, we are forward to admit any truth so far as it is binding upon others, and favourable to ourselves.

3. When a truth happens to cross any interest or passion of our own, *the case is altered;* then our perception is dulled, we hesitate in the face of the clearest evidence, and (according to a remark of Hobbes) are ready to dispute even the plainest mathematical proposition, and still more those which are of a moral and practical nature. When one, for instance, who has suffered a bankruptcy, is told of the equity of making a full restitution to his creditors, whenever

he is able, notwithstanding any legal acquittance he may produce; or one who has rashly entered into engagements which are highly to his disadvantage, that he is bound to use every effort to fulfil them; or one who has received a *challenge*, with every circumstance of insult, that it is his duty to refuse it, and to forgive the man who thus attempted to disgrace his character, or take away his life: in these or similar cases, it would be no surprize, if passion and interest cast a cloud over his understanding, and prevailed upon him to reject truths to which they stood in direct contrariety. And should we ascend still higher to those truths which are more peculiar to christianity, we should probably find them exposed to the same or still greater opposition.

It is therefore a position not to be universally admitted, that "truth would do well enough if left to shift for itself;" nor does Mr. Locke appear to have understood it in this unlimited extent. In his *second letter on toleration* he says, "God alone can open the ear that it may hear, and open the heart that it may understand;" and a little after-

wards he observes, "*Faith is the gift of God;* and we are not to use any means to procure this gift to any one, but what God himself has prescribed." Again, in his *third letter* upon the same subject, speaking of salvation, he tells us, "There can be no necessity of any other means than what God expressly appoints, in a matter where *no means can operate effectually, without the assistance of his grace; and where the assistance of his grace can make any outward means he appoints effectual.*" In these passages, the necessity of *grace,* in addition to all outward means, or mere rational evidence, to render divine *truth* efficacious to salvation, is clearly asserted; and in this sentiment, I apprehend, he is in full agreement with all who now bear the christian name, or who have borne it in former ages, if we except the Pelagians and Socinians.

Further: The progress of christianity in any particular country (meaning by christianity not only the *name* or *doctrine,* but also the spirit and power of the religion taught in the New Testament) depends in a considerable degree, subordinately to di-

vine influence, on the number of zealous and well-informed christians the country contains. A small chosen band of apostles and evangelists converted the world, notwithstanding all the opposition they encountered from its power and policy; and a few apostolical men, though without those miraculous powers which have long been withdrawn from the church, but under the ordinary and abiding efficacy of that promise, *Lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world,* would at this day be sufficient to carry a saving light into the dark corners of a land, and to revive the cause of piety where it languished, or was ready to expire. But when the power of christianity is once lost in a country, and a national establishment is wanting to preserve the form, there is danger lest its very name and profession should vanish quite away.

Should it next be inquired, what would be the effect of toleration on the external form of christianity, in a country where it has gained a prevalence, we might almost with certainty determine, that this would be its division into a multiplicity of parties

and denominations. No one can be ignorant of the various opinions that have been held concerning church-government; all of which, under a general toleration, would have a free stage to act upon. In one district, every parish would be a diocese, and every pastor a bishop, without any political connection with other pastors or parishes. In other districts, many parishes would associate, and put themselves under the direction of an ecclesiastical senate; unless they happened to prefer a monarchical regimen. And I can see no reason, why under any of these forms, or all of them together, the common cause of christianity might not both subsist and prosper, while the moderating hand of the magistrate preserved the several parties from mutual wrong and violence.

We come now to a few short political remarks on the subject before us.

1. A toleration such as here described, would apparently much contribute to the public strength and safety. As all good citizens would in this case be united as in one family, they would naturally look up, with

the same duty and affection, to the state as to their common parent. Or, should this more ingenuous principle be wanting, they would still be held by that tie, which is indeed the great bond of the world in its present corrupt condition, I mean *a sense of interest*; since they all would have an equal stake in the community, as being equally free to participate in its offices, its honours, and its emoluments. Every citizen would then say emphatically *my country*, and would defend it with the zeal of a man who contends for his own patrimony.

2. Secondly: Of whatever religious society the magistrate may choose to be a member, he should take care to conduct himself in that relation as a private individual, and not as a public functionary; otherwise, by his political influence, he would probably corrupt the principles of his own sect, and excite the jealousy of others; and this might gradually proceed to a general depravity in religion, and at last terminate in civil disturbances *. It

* "To maintain civil government in due vigour, and to allow a general liberty of conscience; to act like a

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might therefore become his prudence as well as his piety, to stand at such a distance from all appearance of partiality in his public administration, that, if he made any difference in dispensing his political favours, he should rather deal them out with a sparing hand to those of his own church than to others, as such a conduct would serve to convince the world that religion was no secular interest, would tend to allay the jealousies of other churches, and promote the purity of his own; and would be a probable way to settle the country at large in a state both of civil and religious tranquillity.

3. Lastly: While the religion of a country is divided into a multitude of sects, of which no one, either in numbers or influence, is much superior to the rest, the civil power may, without much difficulty, keep them all in due order. One sect would oppose another, and by their mutual counteraction a balance would be produced; and should this at any time be disturbed to

king rather than a *priest*, is a sure way to preserve a state from those tempests, which a dogmatical spirit powerfully tends to excite." *Anti-Machiavel*, ch. 26.

a degree inconsistent with the public peace, a gentle interposition of the magistrate's authority might be sufficient to restore it. But should any one sect, whether by the force of truth, by the influence of a popular leader, or some other cause, obtain a decided ascendancy, it might come to sway the government, and, by degrees, get it entirely into its hands; and then the result would be *an establishment*: a result which, sooner or later, under a general toleration, would almost with certainty take place; just as a monarchy is the usual and natural termination of a republic. And as a monarchy is either absolute or limited, so an establishment may either entirely exclude a toleration, or admit it under certain terms and restrictions.

SECTION III.

On an Establishment without Toleration.

BY an establishment is here meant these three things; an order of men set apart to attend on the offices of religion; a legal provision for their maintenance; and a restriction of this provision to teachers of a certain description. It is such an establishment, exclusive of a toleration, either complete or partial, whose merits we are now to examine.

It is evident this is a system which can never be maintained without *force;* for as men differ widely in their opinions on almost all subjects, and on none more than those which are of a spiritual nature, they can never be brought without *coercion* (nor perhaps with it) to a perfect uniformity in their creed, worship, or discipline. Every reason therefore which can justly be urged against the use of force in religion, will

hold equally against the wisdom and propriety of such a system.

Amongst other arguments against the application of force in things spiritual, we may notice the following:

1. *It is unfit.* Religion depends on conviction, and all rational conviction depends on evidence*; and force, whatever impression it may make upon the body, is no apt medium to convey light into the understanding. It will convey indeed a feeling intimation that you are willing another should be of your opinion; or, rather, that he should speak your language, and conform to your practice; but will afford him no good reason why he should do either. Again, its *unfitness* may be also inferred from the utter silence of the New Testament, where we find a very particular

* To prevent ambiguity, let it here be observed, that a proposition may be received either upon its *own* evidence, or upon the evidence we have of the knowledge and veracity of the person who asserts it; and in either case it may produce the most satisfactory conviction. When we have full proof of a divine revelation, all doubt and hesitation must be excluded, notwithstanding any difficulty that may be found in the things revealed.

enumeration of the means to be employed in the spread of the gospel; and among them not the least mention or insinuation of the use of force, which seems to denote its exclusion; and the same may be argued still more strongly from its contrariety to the whole genius of the christian dispensation. *My kingdom,* says Christ, *is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight**. And when two of his zealous disciples would have commanded fire from heaven to consume a village of the Samaritans, which refused to receive him, *he rebuked them, and said, ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them*†. In the same spirit of charity and forbearance, the apostle Paul tells his son Timothy, *the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves: if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth*‡. Nor let any one here suggest,

* John xviii. 36. † Luke ix. 54-6. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 24.5.

that though the *servant of the Lord* must not strive himself, he may get the magistrate to *strive* for him; lest by such a gloss he should give room to suspect, that he had more of the spirit of an inquisitor, than of the spirit which animated the apostle. Lastly, the gospel is provided with powers of its own, and which are best adapted to the accomplishment of its own purposes; and it certainly stands in no need of human violence, or of that *wrath of man which worketh not the righteousness of God**.

* "The whole covenant and work of grace, is the contrivance of God's infinite wisdom. What it is, and by what means he will dispense his grace, is known to us by revelation only; which is so little suited to human wisdom, that the apostle calls it the *foolishness of preaching*. In the scripture is contained all that revelation, and all things necessary for that work, all the means of grace: there God has declared all that he would have done for the salvation of souls: and if he had thought force necessary to be joined with the *foolishness of preaching*, no doubt but he would, somewhere or other, have revealed it, and not left it to the wisdom of man; which, how disproportioned and opposite it is to the ways and wisdom of God in the gospel, and how unfit to be trusted in the business of salvation, you may see. 1 Cor. i. from ver. 17 to the end."

Mr. LOCKE's Third Letter on Toleration, ch. x. p. 304.

2. Another argument against the use of *force* in religion, is, that *it prevents free and impartial inquiry.* To search in this manner, the mind must be thoroughly disposed to obtain all the light it can upon the subject in question, and to be determined by it; which implies that it is neither warped by prejudice, nor swayed by affection. This equal state of the understanding will hardly be able to subsist while the rod hangs suspended over the head of the inquirer, and ready to smite, should he be led to a conclusion different from that prescribed by the power to which he is subject. For as fear (according to the remark of a Hebrew sage *) *betrays the succours which reason offereth,* so it is equally unpropitious to reason itself; it prevents its just exercise, it weakens its powers, and reduces it to bondage, and, at the same time, cuts off those succours which are offered for its assistance. Thus the dread of an inquisition, or of some other tribunal much less formidable, has often intercepted the light and aid afforded by

* Book of Wisdom, ch. xvii. ver. 12.

revelation, and prevented all examination into its evidence or doctrines, notwithstanding the many declarations it contains to the contrary: *If ye believe not me,* said our Saviour, *believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him* *; which is a manifest appeal to the understanding of the Jews, implying, that they ought to infer his mission from the wonders which he wrought. *Go,* says he elsewhere, *and show John these things:—the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them; and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me* †; which conveys another appeal of the same nature. On another occasion he directs the Jews to *search the scriptures,* because in them was eternal life ‡. And when the Pharisees with the Sadducees required of him a sign from heaven, he answered, *When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, there cometh a shower, and so it is; and when ye see the south wind*

* John x. 38. † Matt. xi. 5, 6. ‡ John v. 39.

blow, ye say, there will be heat, and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?* Which contains a vehement exprobration of their neglect to make the same use of their understandings in spiritual as they did in natural things. In the Acts of the Apostles, the Bereans are commended as more *noble* (ευγενεστεροι, *better-born, or of a more liberal and generous nature)* than those of Thessalonica, because *they received the word with all readiness, and searched the scriptures daily whether these things were so*†. *Prove all things,* says the apostle to the Thessalonians, *hold fast that which is good*‡. And again he thus addresses the Corinthians: *My brethren, be not children in understanding, howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men*§. I have cited these passages to show, that christianity both commands and encourages a fair and serious examination; that its ge-

* Luke xii. 54-7, and Matt. xvi. 1-3.

† Acts xvii. 10. ‡ 1 Thess. v. 21. § 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

nius is noble and generous, and rejects all violent and coercive methods; as being perfectly sufficient by its own light and efficacy alone, without any aid from such mechanical force, both to convince the understanding, and to captivate the heart *to the obedience of faith.*

3. A third argument against intolerance in religion is, *that it affords a presumption against the religion itself it is meant to support;* as may appear from the following considerations.

And, first, we may observe that, in general, violence is less a character of strength than of weakness, and especially in things intellectual or moral. When a man is clear and decided in his judgment, he is better able to brook opposition than when he is cloudy and wavering. He feels the force of the old adage, *magna est veritas et prevalebit;* he is secure and temperate in the defence of a cause which he knows must triumph; and is more disposed to regard its enemies with forbearance and pity, than to pursue them with a rash and cruel resentment. There are few persons, I suppose,

who may not recollect, that in their literary or religious debates, they have been most gentle and tolerant, when they have had the clearest evidence on their side; and that a consciousness of strength has, in this case, inspired them with moderation; and, on the contrary, that they have been most intolerant and irascible when reason has most failed them. Nor was the honest countryman much out in his judgment, who (as is said) excused his going to hear a Latin disputation at the university, by observing, that he should know which of the parties was foiled in the contest, by noting him who first lost his temper. Thus a violent spirit furnishes to the most simple bystander a presumption against the goodness of the cause in which it is employed; and to him who is actually galled and smarting under the rod of persecution, we cannot wonder if this presumption should be advanced to a reputed certainty.

Another branch of this argument against intolerance may thus be deduced. Divine truth is perhaps of all other the most difficult to be attained or communicated. Its

ancient alliance with the human mind being broken, we are now apt to regard it with suspicion, to entertain it with jealousy, to be startled with any slight objection against it, and to be offended with every appearance of intemperate zeal or of misconduct in its friends or advocates. An experience of these sad effects of our common apostasy will dispose a wise and good man to forbearance; he will say, let those deal harshly with opposers, who have never known the difficulties that lie in the way of truth, and the darkness in which it is often involved; who have never been duly sensible of the weakness of human understanding, and of the innumerable prejudices and passions which impede its progress, and fetter its exertions. Hence, from a want of forbearance, may be inferred a want of examination, or serious inquiry; and what we have not sought, it is not probable we have found. And thus will the conclusion again follow, that intolerance in religion forms by itself a just objection against the very religion it is meant to support.

It may further be observed under this

head, that as the natural expression of truth is charity, and as charity is very unnaturally expressed by persecution, it must be an obvious consequence, that between persecution and truth there can be no legitimate connection. And, indeed, the former is so extremely repugnant both to the spirit and precepts of christianity, as to afford a powerful argument against any doctrine or church by which it is taught or practised. "That the true disciples of Christ," says Mr. Locke, "must suffer persecution, the gospel frequently declares, but that the church of Christ should persecute others, and force them by fire and sword to embrace her faith and doctrines, I could never yet find in any of the books of the New Testament*."

4. The last argument I shall notice against the use of force in religion, is, *that it makes hypocrites.* For as force is *not* suited to produce conviction, and *is* suited to produce an external compliance, it must evidently tend to produce hypocrisy. This

* *First* Letter on Toleration.

tendency has indeed in many instances been counteracted and overcome, as appears from that *cloud of witnesses*, who have nobly sacrificed their ease, their estates, and even their lives for the sake of religion; but in too many other instances we have to lament, that the dread of suffering has prevailed against faith and a good conscience. Under the primitive persecutions there were numbers who disavowed or dissembled their real sentiments; and under similar trials, the same, doubtless, has happened in every subsequent period. This falshood and prevarication appears to have been frequent among the French protestants during the bigoted and cruel reign of Lewis the Fourteenth. And if we look back to the history of our own country, from the rejection of the Pope's supremacy by Henry the Eighth, to the establishment of the reformation by Elizabeth, we find, during this short period of about twenty-five years, four revolutions in religion, in each of which a great majority, both of the clergy and laity, complied with the requisition of the prince; which certainly many of them could not do

without the grossest dissimulation. These are historical facts which reflect disgrace on human nature; and should excite us all diligently to cherish and strengthen our religious principle, and to deprecate a season, which might put the most confirmed piety to a severe and dangerous trial.

Such are the general arguments we have thought fit to propose against the use of force in religion, and which may perhaps receive some further illustration, by considering the effects of intolerance in its three following stages and gradations.

1. First, when it is *merely negative*, or when it only prohibits any religious exercise or profession, unauthorized by the church established. In this case, as the rigid dissenter would be debarred from any *public* worship of God, his devotional exercises must be confined within the walls of his own house, where, if practised at all, it is not probable they would long continue without the aid and encouragement derived from social piety, and from that regular public instruction, on which the prosperity, and, in respect to the bulk of a

people, the very existence of religion so much depends. And should he further be restrained from proposing his particular sentiments to his fellow-citizens, they would then be shut up within his own breast, which probably would produce either a sullen dissatisfaction, and a more confirmed dissent, or lead him to a disregard or rejection of all religion whatever.

2. The next stage of intolerance would be to use compulsory methods to enforce a public attendance on the teaching and offices of the church. Now suppose a congregation thus driven together under a sermon, would not the probable consequence be, that half of them would not listen at all, and that the other half would hear with prejudice and resentment? And though some of them should learn what they knew not before, it would be to no good purpose, unless they were brought to love the instruction; which would be as improbable, as that a boy at school should love his lesson, when he was taught it with the rod constantly suspended over him. And should people be driven in like manner to the

prayers of the church, or to her sacraments, especially if conceived or administered in a mode disagreeing (whether rightly or not) with their own judgment, no one will imagine that it would any better conduce to their edification. It is true indeed, and to be much lamented, that the same grievances exist in every congregation, though voluntarily assembled; some hearers are careless, some prejudiced, while others, though they receive the truth, yet they receive it not *in love*, or with practical effect; and no more is here meant than to note the probability, that by an application of *force*, these evils would be still more extended and aggravated.

3. The last stage of intolerance that remains to be remarked, is, when force is employed to extort a public approbation of some established form of doctrine, worship, or discipline. This is a degree of spiritual tyranny, for which no plea would be heard except by a Spanish inquisition. An injunction of silence might derive a kind of apology from considerations of the public peace, and the general interests of truth. Even

a compulsory attendance on the established means of instruction might receive some plausible defence, from a regard to the spiritual welfare of the party immediately interested. But by compelling the open avowal of a falshood, to make a direct and violent attack upon a man's conscience, and thus to put him under the most dangerous temptation, *that* of sacrificing his integrity to his ease, his interest, or his safety, is a proceeding which admits of no pretext or apology, and deserves to be treated with marked and universal detestation. These are horrors which it may be useful to recal to remembrance, in order to make us more grateful for our present blessings; for that liberty and security which were purchased by the blood of our forefathers, and are handed down to us as our fairest inheritance; and which, I trust, it will be our zealous and faithful endeavour to transmit sacred and unimpaired to our latest posterity.

Having thus stated the probable influence of religious intolerance on religion itself; we now proceed to view it in some other respects.

1. It tends to produce wars and commotions within the bosom of a state, whenever the part untolerated bears any considerable proportion to the whole. Men naturally resist oppression, and especially when it is exercised in religious matters. They will, in general, more easily suffer an encroachment upon their civil rights and liberties, than to be prescribed to in their faith and worship. When their consciences are thus touched, they are immediately roused to opposition, and are ready to repel the violence by every means in their power. To this spirit of intolerance, we are chiefly to ascribe the wars in Germany at the time of the reformation; the civil war in France, which commenced under Charles the Ninth, and continued, with some intermissions, for thirty years; the insurrection of the Low Countries, which happily terminated in the deliverance of seven provinces from the inquisition, and from the tyranny of Spain; and, to name one instance more, the last civil war in our land, which destroyed the monarchy, and brought the king himself to the scaffold.

2. *It tends to depopulate and impoverish a state.* Men who cannot enjoy, in their own country, the liberty to worship God in the manner which they judge most acceptable to him, will generally be disposed to seek this liberty elsewhere. They may not withdraw with clamour, or in large bodies; but the state will find itself insensibly drained of its citizens, without any accession of foreigners to supply their place; for few will be inclined to submit themselves to a power which would impose shackles on their minds as well as their bodies. And if to this silent emigration is added the more sensible and sudden diminution, occasioned by those coercive methods which some infatuated governments have employed to rid themselves of their subjects, the country must quickly be reduced to a want of sufficient hands to carry on its necessary business. Thus by the expulsion of seven hundred thousand Jews from Spain, by Ferdinand and Isabella, and of as many Moriscoes about a hundred years afterwards, by Philip the Third, and for no other reason, which appears, than because they would not turn catholics, the

agriculture and commerce of that unhappy country received a blow, from which they never recovered*. And at a later period, France, on the same account, bereaved herself of half a million of her best subjects, who carried into this and other countries those arts and manufactures, by which they were not permitted to enrich their own †. Such are the dire effects of intolerance when it stalks through a land! Its inhabitants are thinned, its trade languishes, its fields and vineyards lie waste; before it is *as the garden of Eden*, and behind it *a desolate wilderness*.

3. The miseries of intolerance will further appear, if we look more closely into its effects in the interior of a country. It degrades the national character, which (according to a former remark) is not more ennobled and elevated by a just liberty, than it is sunk and debased by tyranny;

* See l'Histoire des Juifs, par Basnage, liv. vii. chap. 21. L'Histoire Generale, par Voltaire, ch. 146. and Michael Geddes' account of the expulsion of the Moriscoes from Spain.

† Hume's History of England, vol. viii. p. 255-6.

and by religious tyranny more than by any other. It fills a land, as we have seen, with hypocrisy; for since, under the reign of intolerance, there is no medium between a confessor and a hypocrite for such as dissent from the national church, it is more than probable that, in the present state of human nature, those of the latter character will form the larger body.—It obstructs all that ingenuous and friendly intercourse which constitutes the principal charm of social life; the most important topic of rational and interesting converse is nearly cut off; and every other that bears the remotest relation to it must be treated with a caution, which will suffer no word or sentiment to escape that might be construed into heretical pravity. In a word, *the foundations are out of course*, mutual confidence is shaken, and every man is tempted to look with suspicion on his neighbour, from a secret apprehension lest, instead of a fellow-citizen, he should find in him a *familiar* of the inquisition.

4. Lastly: Religious despotism casts an unfavourable aspect on many branches even

of human knowledge; it may be sufficient to instance in political and natural science.

As all our duties, civil as well as natural, bear some relation to religion, and are bound upon us by its authority, it must be obvious to every one, how easily a spiritual jurisdiction, erected by fanatical, superstitious, or designing men, may be made to extend itself over affairs that are purely secular. And, in fact, such a jurisdiction, during many former ages, was extended over a great part of the christian world. The reciprocal rights and duties of sovereigns and subjects, which it is of so much importance to establish, and so extremely dangerous to nullify or relax, have been often entirely superseded by the usurped power of the Roman pontiffs, who, at their pleasure, have imposed sovereigns over some nations, and released other nations, or the same, from all obedience to their sovereigns. In the year thirteen hundred and two, *Matthew Visconti,* lord of Milan, was summoned before the inquisition, at the instance of pope John the Twenty-second, and branded with *heresy,* for no other reason than his

attachment to his superior lord, *Lewis*, the emperor of Bavaria; and other feudatory chiefs were treated in like manner, and on the same account *. In the last *general states* held in France before those summoned at the commencement of the late revolution, when a motion was made by the *tiers etat*, or the *commons*, for the establishment of a law, "that no spiritual power could deprive kings of their rights, and that it was high treason for any one to teach they might justly be deposed or murdered;" the cardinal *du Perron* vehemently contended against the proposition, asserting, "that the papal power was direct as to spirituals, indirect as to temporals; and that he was commissioned to declare, in the name of the whole Gallican church, that whoever denied the power of the pope to depose kings, should be excommunicated †." When the principles of political science are thus con-

* L'Histoire Generale, par Voltaire, ch. 118.

† Id. ch. 206. This happened in 1614. It is true, the French clergy held a different language in 1682. (Id. ibid.) What they hold at present I cannot tell.

tracted by an arrogant tribunal, whose authority, if any one presume to question, he is treated as a heretic, their progress cannot fail to be greatly impeded.

Nor has natural science suffered less under the baleful influence of a superstitious tyranny. Nature and religion corresponded to each other at their origin; they correspond to each other still; for christianity is the religion of nature as now fallen; and that science which more clearly unfolds the present constitution and laws of the natural world, is favourable to the christian system, and is favoured by it. All this is reversed in the case before us; since between superstition and a sound philosophy there can be no agreement. Hence her menacing denunciations against inquiries which might detect her ignorance, and endanger her pretensions:

> Furiarum maxima juxtà
> Accubat, ——————————
> Exsurgitque facem attollens, atque intonat ore.
>
> VIRGIL.

This persecuting rage has been experienced by learned and inquisitive men at

different periods. It was experienced in the thirteenth century by our renowned countryman, *Roger Bacon*, who was accused as a magician by the *general* of his *order*, and by pope Clement the Fourth cast into the prison of the inquisition at Rome, where he remained shut up for many years, and for no other cause, that we know of, than his superiority to the age in which he lived. It was experienced by the equally renowned Florentine, *Galileo*, who, three hundred years afterwards, was thrown into the same prison in the same city, for maintaining the earth's motion and the sun's immobility; a *heresy* which, at length, he was brought to abjure, and in a manner the most humiliating *.

* It may not be displeasing to some of my readers to find here a more particular account of this extraordinary transaction, as history affords us few documents which show more strongly the repugnancy between superstition and true philosophy. It was one *Scheiner*, a Jesuit, who denounced the above opinion of *Galileo* to the inquisition, which, after examination, condemned it as *heretical*; and directed Cardinal Bellamine to expostulate with the author, and to require him to renounce the said opinion, and no more to teach it by word or writing; which the philosopher having promised, he

Such things have been, and may again be, should perverted science invite the return of superstition, and abused liberty drive the

was for that time dismissed. But afterwards, taking advantage of two inquisitorial decrees of a different tenor, he ventured to republish his former doctrine, and, in consequence, was again summoned before the *holy office*, and received its solemn and definitive sentence, of which the following is an extract.

"We, *Gaspar Borgia*, &c. cardinals of the holy Roman church, specially deputed by the holy apostolic See, to be inquisitors against heretical pravity throughout the whole christian republic. Whereas you, *Galileo*, son of the late Vincent Galileo, of Florence, aged seventy, were informed against in the year 1615, in this holy office, that you maintained as true a certain false doctrine, held by many, viz. that the sun was in the centre of the world, and immoveable, and that the earth moved even with a daily motion.—We do by this our definitive sentence, judge and declare, that you the aforesaid *Galileo* have rendered yourself vehemently suspected of heresy to this *holy office*, and consequently that you have incurred all the censures and penalties appointed by the sacred canons, and other constitutions, against such offenders; from which, notwithstanding, 'tis our pleasure that you should be absolved, provided that you do first, with a sincere heart, and faith unfeigned, abjure, curse, and detest before us the aforesaid errors and heresies, and every other error and heresy, contrary to the catholic and apostolic Roman church, in

nations to seek refuge under the reign of despotism.

Should it still be alleged, notwithstand-

that form which shall be exhibited to you by us. But lest your pernicious and grievous error and transgression should go altogether unpunished, and that yourself may be rendered more cautious for the future, and that you may be an example to others, that they may abstain from such crimes, we decree, that the Book of Dialogues of *Galileo* shall be prohibited by a public edict, and we condemn you formally to be imprisoned in this holy office for a time determinable at our pleasure; and we enjoin you, under the title of a voluntary penance, that for the three years ensuing you repeat, once in a week, the seven penitential psalms; reserving to ourselves the power of moderating, changing, or wholly, or in part, removing the aforesaid penalties and penances. Thus we the underwritten cardinals pronounce." *Subscribed by seven cardinal inquisitors.*

In consequence of the above sentence, *Galileo*, reduced to his knees before the holy tribunal, made his abjuration; in which, among other particulars, he says, "Having been juridically enjoined and commanded, wholly to forsake that false opinion, which holds that the sun is the centre and immoveable; and having since written and printed a book, in which I treat of the said doctrine already condemned, and produce arguments of great force in favour of it, without giving any answer to them, I am now judged by the holy office as vehemently suspected of heresy, viz. that I have held and

ing all that has been advanced upon this topic, that every man, ruler as well as subject, must be directed by his own conscience; let it be observed on the other side, that when conscience is erroneous, all that is done in obedience to it must partake of its

believed that the sun is the centre of the world, and that the earth is not the centre, nor at rest. Being therefore willing to remove from the minds of your Eminences, and of every catholic christian, this vehement suspicion legally conceived against me, I do, with a sincere heart and faith unfeigned, abjure, curse, and detest the aforesaid errors and heresies, and in general every other error and sect contrary to the aforesaid holy church."

After some other penitential confessions and protestations, he thus concludes: "I the abovesaid Galileo, have abjured, sworn, promised, and obliged myself as above; and in testimony thereof have subscribed, with my own proper hand, this present record of my abjuration, and have repeated it word for word at Rome, in the convent of Minerva, the 22d day of July, 1633."

No sooner however was he set at liberty, than seized (as we are told) with remorse, he cast his eyes upon the ground, and, striking it with his foot, said indignantly, *(E pur si move) it moves notwithstanding*. See *Querelles literaires*, tom. iii. p. 41-52; and *An Antidote against Popery*, by John Marchant, London, 1756, p. 110-17.

viciousness and obliquity. It is possible the magistrate may seriously think it his duty to use *force* in matters of religion; yet, if his persuasion rests upon insufficient grounds, such an application of force would be wrong and unjustifiable. It is not enough for a religious intolerant to plead conscience; it remains for him still to inquire *how he came by his conscience;* whether it was formed corruptly or negligently, or upon the principles of piety and charity, after due examination and circumspection. By proceeding in this manner, he may be led to discover, that his conscience is little better than a misguided zeal, or perhaps a mere illusion of superstition or enthusiasm, that has served for a pretext to his pride, or some worldly interest; and the more his place in society is consequential and elevated, the more is such an inquiry of importance both to himself and others.

SECTION IV.

Of an Establishment together with a Toleration, and this either complete, or partial.

THE meaning of the terms in the title of this section have been before explained. It has been said, that by an establishment is understood, an order of men set apart to attend on the offices of religion; a legal provision for their maintenance; and a restriction of this provision to teachers of a certain description: That by a *complete* toleration is meant, the undisturbed profession and exercise of religion, together with admission to every privilege and office belonging to the civil government; and by a *partial* toleration, the same full enjoyment of religious liberty, but with restrictions in respect to civil privileges and advantages.

After this brief repetition (in order to avoid ambiguities) we proceed to consider, first, in what manner an establishment, in

conjunction with a complete or partial toleration, bears upon the two great ends to which it ought to be directed, namely, *public instruction*, and *public union and tranquillity;* and shall then take a short view of the sentiments of pagans and Roman catholics, respecting the expediency of the system here in question.

Under a general toleration without an establishment, there is evident danger, lest some parts of a country should be left without any public administration of religion at all. If we look around us in our own land, where such an administration is legally provided, we find numbers, especially in the upper ranks of life, who statedly withdraw themselves from it, and many others who attend with much indifference; so that, were no such provision made, we have little reason to expect, that either the one or the other would supply the deficiency; and those who were of a better mind, would probably, at least in some places, be too few and inconsiderable to provide for themselves. Hence, in such circumstances, the public worship of God would be in danger of a total ex-

tinction, without the aid of the magistrate, who, by dividing the country into commodious districts, and planting in each a clerical teacher, affords to all its inhabitants the means of religious instruction. And should it be said, to diminish this advantage, that the magistrate's religion may possibly be erroneous; yet still, let it be remembered, that there is scarce any religion which is not better than none, as there is scarce any which does not inculcate some important principles of moral duty. Besides, under a *complete* toleration, which is here supposed, if the people be not satisfied with the religion established, they are left to their own liberty; the magistrate comes not to dictate, but to assist; he says, I have provided for you the best I can; if you can do better for yourselves, I am glad of it.

One apparent advantage of the scheme now stated, and in which it is little inferior to that of a *toleration without an establishment*, is, that it unites all the citizens in a zealous attachment to their country, where they all have a common concern, and where,

every invidious distinction being set aside, each is permitted to aspire after any privilege or office, to which his virtues or talents may recommend or entitle him. Thus a nation is bound together by a regard to individual honour and interest, the strongest of all human ties; their resources are consolidated; they are better able to resist foreign violence, or to quell internal disturbance; and to advance still further their common security and welfare.

On the other hand it must be acknowledged, that it is a scheme which, however favourable it may be to the state, may endanger the stability of the church. For as it allows to dissenters a free access to every station of public trust and influence, and even to a place in the senate or in the cabinet, they may at length get full possession of the government; and then (as on a former occasion we have remarked) it is probable they would change the present ecclesiastical establishment for another more agreeable to their own principles. By what methods, under a *complete* toleration, the church may

best secure itself against such a revolution, we shall endeavour to show at large in the next section.

Of a *partial* toleration we may observe, that, in regard to religion only, it is nearly upon a level with that which is *complete;* since it leaves every one without compulsion, either to join himself to the establishment, or to pursue his own edification in any way he may think better. In other respects, the difference appears more considerable. The tendency of a *complete* toleration, as we have seen, is in favour of the state, but unfavourable to the establishment. On the contrary, a *partial* toleration may seem to give more security to the establishment, as it excludes from the government all those who might endanger its safety; and to be less favourable to the state, as it tends to breed dissatisfaction in a body of citizens truly attached to their country, by laying them under *incapacities* of serving it, and of serving it too in ways which yield both honour and emolument. And though very moderate men might overlook such discriminations, others would resent them; and it is the part of a wise go-

vernment, by every possible measure, to prevent or remove such offences, and to unite all its subjects in the same affectionate attachment to one another, and to the general welfare.

II. Of the expediency of a national establishment of religion, were we to take our opinion from the general usage of the world, we should judge very favourably. *Warburton* goes so far as to maintain, that through all antiquity the practice was universal. "We find," says he, "all states and people in the ancient world had *an established religion*, which was under the more immediate protection of the civil magistrate, in contradistinction to those who were only tolerated *." This he elsewhere extends to modern times; and to support his assertion, cites a passage from *Tavernier*, a famous voyager, who, in his account of *Tonquin*, thus speaks: "I come now to the political description of this kingdom, under which I comprehend the religion, which is almost every where in concert with the civil go-

* Div. Leg. vol. i. p. 231.

vernment, for the mutual support of each other *." It must be noted, however, that all the *establishments* of paganism have far more respect to rites and ceremonies, than to points of truth, or of mere speculative opinion. "It is to be observed," says the author of the *Alliance*, "that unity in the object of faith, and agreement to a formulary of dogmatic theology, as the terms of communion, is the great foundation and bond of a religious society. Now, in all the pagan religions, there is only conformity in national ceremonies; there being no room for the object of faith, or a formulary of dogmatic theology; for as to matters of belief and opinion, it was not judged of moment to determine whether their gods were real persons, or only the symbols of natural powers. Nor did their mysteries consist so much in abstruse points of speculation, as in secret practices †." The above appears, on the whole, to be a just account, and may show us the general pre-

* Alliance between Church and State, p. 113-14.

† Ibid. p. 173-4.

valency of religious establishments in the pagan as well as in the christian world, and also one chief point in which they differed from one another.

Nor was it less usual in pagan nations to tolerate other religions, than to establish their own. As it was a common principle among them, *that all religions are good*, they were ready to receive any of them, upon easy terms, within their respective territories; nay, the same principle led them to a general intercommunity of deities and worship; so that, upon occasion, they would adopt a foreign god into their *establishment*, in addition to those they had already. Thus the emperor *Tiberius* is said to have proposed to the senate, upon receiving the *acts* of Pilate, to enrol *Christ* in the number of the Roman deities; a proposition at that time perfectly natural and agreeable to the Roman custom *. But after they became a little better acquainted with christianity, and found it to be a religion which condemned,

* See Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 53, and the authors there referred to.

and would hold no fellowship with their own, they began to hate and persecute it purely on that account; for it does not appear that, in the first instance, it was opposed as false, but as unsociable and exclusive; a charge which is not improbably supposed to be intended by *Tacitus*, when he says, "That the christians were condemned, not so much for the burning of Rome (of which they were accused) as for their hatred to mankind in general*" Hence we may learn to correct a notion propagated by some modern infidels, namely, that pagan toleration left all religions open and unrestricted; whereas it was generally extended only to such as were subservient, or at least not adverse, to the religion established†; and was so far from exceeding, (as is pretended) that it fell short of what is practised in many christian countries, where rival religions, or, at least, rival forms of the same religion, are in some degree authorised and permitted.

* "Haud perindè in crimine incendii, quàm odio humani generis convicti sunt." TAC. An. lib. XV. ch. 44.

† Div. Leg. vol. i. p. 268-9.

And here it may not be improper to introduce a few testimonies, both of individuals and of public bodies among the Roman catholics, who, of all those that have borne the christian name, are known to have been least favourable to toleration. "Remember," says the cardinal *Camus*, "that the maladies of the soul are not cured by constraint and violence *" And it is observed by *Dirois*, a doctor of the *Sorbonne*, "That to compel religion is to be an enemy of truth ‡." Their famous ecclesiastical historian, *Tillemont*, remarks, "That persuasion is not wrought by menaces, and that violence can only produce hypocrites§." The excellent *Thuanus*, in the dedication of his history to Henry the Fourth, has many admirable observations to the same purpose: "We are taught," says he, "by

* "Souvenez vous que les malades de l'ame ne se guerissent point par contrainte et par violence."

† "L'exaction forcée d'une religion est une preuve evidente que l'esprit qui la conduit est un esprit ennemi de la verité."

‡ "La violence peut faire des hypocrites; on ne persuade point quand on fait retentir partout les menaces."

experience, that force is more likely to irritate than to cure those evils whose seat is in the mind *." To these testimonies of individuals, let me add one more from *Montesquieu*: "If heaven," says he, "has shown you the truth, it has shown you a particular favour; but does it therefore become you, because you enjoy this heritage of your father, to hate those who enjoy it not †?" Further, the French clergy, in the year fifteen hundred and sixty, declared in a body, "We have always disapproved of rigour in the cause of religion ‡." And again, in their address to *Lewis* the Thirteenth, they disavow "all thoughts of destroying errors by violence §." Lastly, in

* "L'expérience nous apprend que la violence est plus capable d'irriter que de guérir un mal qui a sa racine dans l'esprit."

† "Si le ciel vous a assez aimé pour vous faire voir la verité, il vous a fait une grande grace; mais est-ce á ceux qui ont l'heritage de leur pére de haïr ceux qui ne l'ont pas?"

‡ "Nous avons toujours desaprouvé les voyes de rigeur."

§ "Nous ne prétendons point détruire les erreurs par la violence."

agreement with these declarations of the clergy, the parliament of Paris thus remonstrate to *Henry* the Second: "It has appeared to us conformable to equity and right reason, to tread in the steps of the ancient church, which has never used violence to establish or extend her religion *." After these testimonies, and others of a similar nature, whose sincerity, at least in some of the instances, is unquestionable, *Voltaire*, from whom I have extracted them, thus concludes: "By what fatality can it be, that we belie in our conduct a theory which we proclaim every day with our lips? When our practice contradicts our doctrine, we must imagine there is some advantage in acting contrary to what we teach; but certainly it can never be to our advantage, to persecute those who are not of our opinion, and to draw upon us their hatred. I must therefore again assert the absurdity of

* "Il nous a paru conforme á l'équité et a la droite raison, de marcher sur les traces de l'ancienne eglise, qui n'a point usé de violence pour établir et étendre la religion."

intolerance *." All this is just, and may be allowed in extenuation of that charge of literary guilt which lies so heavy on the name and memory of the hapless author.

From what has been advanced in this and the two preceding sections, I think it sufficiently appears, that whatever may be the case of *a toleration without an establishment*, an establishment *without* a toleration, is neither consistent with the true interest of religion, nor with the peace of society; that for the magistrate to interfere at all in religious matters is a point of extreme delicacy; and that when he *does* interfere, it should be his first care to do no harm, either by an unnecessary abridgment of the liberties of any class of citizens; by his patronage of

† "Par quelle fatalité, par quelle inconséquence démentirions-nous dans la pratique une théorie que nous annonçons tous les jours? Quand nos actions démentent nôtre morale, c'est que nous croyons qu'il y a quelque avantage pour nous á faire le contraire de ce que nous enseignons; mais certainement il n'y a aucun avantage à persecuter ceux qui ne sont pas de nôtre avis, et à nous en faire haïr. Il y a donc, encor une fois, de l'absurdité dans l'intolérance."

Traité sur la Tolérance, ch. 15.

a false religion; or by his endeavours to promote the true one in ways that are not agreeable to its spirit, and that might endanger the temporal as well as spiritual welfare of the people. We have already noted some of those furious wars that have been kindled by religious persecution; and where it does not cause an open revolt, it is sure to diffuse an angry ferment, and to engender hypocrisy, which, by gradually undermining principle, may prove more destructive than the bitterest hostile contention. And so far as religion is made a tool for political purposes, the same, or other consequences no less mischievous, may be expected to follow.

The great end of true religion is the salvation of souls; and all that men ought to do in this respect, is to attend to those means which this religion prescribes or warrants. What those means are, may be learnt from the scriptures, especially of the New Testament. Among them, we may reckon the education of youth, the restraining of immorality, the discountenance of idleness, the encouragement of honest in-

dustry; and, above all, a provision of faithful men duly qualified for the ministry of the gospel, in which is eminently displayed *the power of God unto salvation.* That nation where this provision is best made, and the subordinate means best attended to, is undoubtedly in the happiest circumstances; and whether this is done by the people or the government, or by the co-operation of both, is a circumstance of no material consideration.

Whoever looks into the history of former ages, and observes how much religion has been obstructed and debased by tyrannic and corrupt governments, he may see reason to congratulate a people when they are left to provide for themselves in their spiritual concerns, at the single impulse of their own consciences. Yet, considering the general disregard of mankind to every thing that relates to another world, he may see still greater cause of congratulation, when, by the special favour of heaven, a people is blessed with truly enlightened and christian rulers, who are no less studious to promote their religious advantages, than to establish

and perpetuate their just rights, and secure their temporal welfare. We conclude, therefore, on the whole, that *an establishment with a toleration,* especially when the toleration is *complete,* is preferable to either of them separately; inasmuch as it unites—"liberty of conscience with means of instruction; the progress of truth with the peace of society; the right of private judgment with the care of the public safety *."

* PALEY'S Mor. and Pol. Phil. vol. ii. p. 344.

SECTION V.

On the most effectual Methods by which an established Church may support herself under a complete Toleration.

THE methods most adapted to the end here proposed, appear, in my apprehension, to be the three following:

I. To provide the best means of spiritual instruction and edification.

II. To advance no unjust claims of superior purity to other churches, either in point of doctrine, worship, or discipline; and even when such claims are well founded, not to assert them with a disproportioned or unhallowed zeal.

III. Not to narrow the terms of church communion beyond the warrant of scripture.

I. The church must provide the best means of spiritual instruction and edifica-

tion; among which the following I conceive to be the most considerable.

1. *Her doctrine must be evangelical.* She must not teach repentance without faith, pardon without atonement, nor morality without grace. Christ must be exhibited in virtue of his *obedience unto death*, as exalted to be a saviour as well as a prince; as seated on a throne of grace and mercy, dispensing the aids of his spirit and the blessings of forgiveness, as well as on a throne of dominion issuing his laws and commandments. Again, the doctrine of repentance must be thoroughly opened; the false notions concerning it, and that have always prevailed in the world, must be detected; its true nature must be unfolded, and shown to consist in nothing short of a *moral revolution*, by which a man becomes so much changed in his principles and views (and not barely in his outward conduct) that, in the language of scripture, he may properly be denominated (καινη κ]ισις) *a new creature*. Further, in explaining the means by which this change is effected, it must be shown, that it is not educed from any powers of na-

ture; that it neither originates from any principles derived to us as the offspring of Adam; nor follows as a natural consequence, either from our own exertions, or from the arguments or persuasions of others; that it is *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;* and must be sought as a gift from the Saviour of the world, who is no less the source of repentance, than he is of pardon and of divine acceptance. Lastly, when the church instructs her members in the duties and offices of civil and social life, let her not forget to connect them with those motives and considerations peculiar to the gospel, besides such as the gospel holds in common with natural religion. A doctrine thus evangelical, when duly dispensed by men who are truly interested in its success, can never fail to attract both a numerous and a willing audience.

But if the people be presented with nothing but a dry morality; if they be pressed with obligations, and have no adequate direction how they may discharge them; if *duty* be disunited from *grace* and pardon-

ing mercy, through the merits and sacrifice of Christ; or our duties towards man from those we owe to God; if reformation of life be separated from *renovation of heart;* or the doctrine of manners be substituted for the doctrine which is *according to godliness:* in these cases, the people either will not listen, or listen with indifference or discouragement. *The hungry sheep look up and are not fed;* and we cannot wonder, if they betake themselves to other pastures, where they find a more nutritious, or, at least, a more relishing and agreeable aliment.

2. *She must pay a proper attention to elementary and catechetical instruction.* How important it is to be well grounded in the elements of any art or science, and even of any ordinary business or profession, every one must be sensible; and it would be strange to suppose it less necessary in respect to the knowledge of God, and of our moral and religious obligations. Yet, however strange it may be, there are many in these times who think, or at least who speak, and many more who act, as if religion was the only thing which, without

any care or culture of man, would grow up of itself, or be inspired of heaven, in its proper or appointed season. But the church, if a true mother, has different thoughts, and will deal otherwise with her children. In dependance on divine aid and blessing, she will take them betimes under her tuition; she will train them up from early childhood in the *discipline and admonition of the Lord;* she will proportion herself, both in the matter and manner of her teaching, to the measure of their capacity; her matter will be *milk and not strong meat*, the first and simplest principles of divine truth, natural or revealed, till they are capable of higher discoveries; and her manner will be familiar and catechetical.

Without this introductory mode of teaching, which is now fallen into so much neglect, no church, I conceive, can be very prosperous. It is a primary defect, which afterwards cannot easily be supplied. Children uncatechized may go for years together to church or meeting, without any sensible advance in religious knowledge or improvement; whereas, if prepared by more familiar lessons, there are few sermons

that would not yield them some profitable instruction. And let me add, that catechetical lectures are scarcely less proper for some of a more advanced age, who, for want of elementary principles, are almost equally unqualified to understand any regular and digested discourse on divine subjects; nor are they improper for christians of any age or standing, or require less ability in the teacher. "In truth," says Bishop Hall, "the most useful of all preaching is catechetical."—"For my part," he adds, "I have spent the greater half of my life in this station of our holy service: I thank God, not unpainfully nor unprofitably: but there is no one thing of which I repent so much, as not to have bestowed more hours in this exercise of catechizing. In regard whereof, I could quarrel with my very sermons, and wish that a great part of them had been exchanged for this *preaching conference* *." And Dr. Fuller, well known for his church history, expresses his earnest desire that, "The ancient and primitive ordinance of catechizing might be restored."—

* Epist. Dedic. to his discourse on *The Old Religion.*

"Every youth," he observes, "can *preach*, but he must be a man indeed, who can profitably *catechize**." It is evidently implied, however, in these passages, that the catechist does not confine himself to the bare *questions* and *answers* drawn up in any fixed *formula*, but varies, explains, amplifies, and interrogates as he finds occasion; and when this is done discreetly, and with a true pastoral love and condescension, it must be allowed that no mode of teaching carries either more light or impression.

The primitive church (as all know who have the least acquaintance with ecclesiastical antiquity) was particularly attentive to this preliminary part of her charge. Those who were candidates for her communion, were first taught privately at home, by persons deputed by the bishop; and it was not before they were sufficiently instructed in the primary and simplest principles of christianity, that they were admitted to some parts of the public worship of the church; particularly to such sermons as were adapted

* Mixt contempt, sect. 49.

to their present capacity, and meant to prepare them for a nearer union with the faithful. For none, in those purer times, were admitted to the higher forms of christianity, till they had passed the inferior with approbation *. "It was the wicked policy of heretics," says Tertullian, "to make no difference between the *catechumen* and the confirmed believer †." It is true, that what is here said referred to converts, and consequently to adults, from among the heathens; but it shows the extreme caution then used by the church in receiving members to full communion. And are there no adults in christian countries who are little better than heathens? None who are grown up to every other kind of knowledge and accomplishments, and yet who need to be taught *the first principles of the oracles of God;* and to whom the church ought to assign the place of *catechumens?* unless, in the present relaxed state of discipline, she thought it more prudent to

* See Cave's Primitive Christianity, part i. p. 215-17: and Sir Peter King's Constitution of the Prim. Church, part i. p. 100-3.

† "Quis catechumenus, quis fidelio, incertum est; pariter audiunt, pariter orant." TERTUL. de præscript.

teach them indirectly their christian elements, through the medium of her particular addresses to children in the public congregation.

From what causes the part of religious instruction of which we have been speaking, has fallen into such general disuse, it may not be unnecessary for those to inquire, whose peculiar office it is to apply a remedy. It may deserve their consideration, whether our present catechisms are sufficiently accommodated, either in matter or manner, to the capacities of children. He who shall look into the *Assemblies' Catechism*, generally used in Scotland, or into that of our own church, will hardly rank them under this description; and after all the attempts that have been since made to supply this deficiency, *a catechism for children*, I apprehend, still remains a *desideratum*, which, whoever shall furnish, will thereby do religion a more essential service, than she would receive from works that are held in much greater estimation. And were other catechetical forms drawn up, adapted in like manner to the several stages of youth, and proportioned to the gradual opening of the understand-

ing, they would doubtless be attended with many special advantages.

3. *Her general discourses from the pulpit, must rather be plain and expository, than carious or polemical, or confined to single and insulated texts of scripture.* The bulk of most congregations is composed of the poor and the unlearned, to whom a sermon must be plain, both in its matter and expression, to be intelligible; it must neither be perplexed with subtleties, embarrassed with learning, nor clouded with rhetoric. What constitutes the chief matter of a truly evangelical ministry, may be learnt from the apostle Paul's address to the elders of the church of Ephesus, in which he tells them, that "*he had kept back nothing that was profitable for them;* that *he had taught them publicly, and from house to house; testifying both to Jews and Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ;*" observing, in conclusion, *that he had not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God**." Which shows, that the standing subject of his teaching amongst them, consisted of no

* Acts xx. 20, 21, and 27.

abstruse or curious speculations, but of the two great fundamental doctrines of the gospel, repentance and faith. And in what language the church ought to speak to her children, she may also collect from the example of the same apostle, who, in *declaring the testimony of God, came not with excellency of speech,—not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit,—not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect**. In which passages, though no one will suppose that any exclusion was intended of that simple and pathetic eloquence, of which the apostle himself was so great a master, there is certainly contained a strong censure of those pedantic or declamatory harangues, which are so often admired, and so little felt or understood.

Again: Were the church oftener to use familiar expositions, attended with suitable applications, of larger portions of scripture, instead of regular sermons upon single texts; it might be more conducive to gene-

* 1 Cor. i. 17, and ii. 1-4.

ral instruction and edification. The little capacity of the bulk of the common people, to comprehend a long and digested discourse upon any subject, is scarcely credible to those who have not attended to it. Exactness of method, or a train of argument, is lost upon them; and all that they will be found to retain of an address thus constructed, will be a few simple or pointed observations, which they would have received more easily, and with better effect, had they been delivered in a more familiar way; besides that, by the expository method, a greater proportion of divine truth is brought under consideration, and with more of that powerful simplicity in which it is presented in scripture. Hence we may infer, the general superiority of scriptural and practical expositions, at least to ordinary congregations, whatever may be alleged in favour of sermons, or discourses from a single text, before some auditories, and on particular occasions. Nor do I recollect in the whole Bible a single instance of a discourse formed after the same model with that of our present sermons; and it is certain, that the

expository mode of preaching was by far the most prevalent, during the first and best ages of the christian church. *Justin Martyr*, near the close of his *Apology*, informs us, that "on the day, called Sunday, all that lived either in city or country, met together at the same place, where the writings of the apostles and prophets were read; that when this was done, the bishop delivered a discourse, in which he instructed the people, and animated them to the practice of what they had heard." Upon this passage Dr. Cave observes, that "Sermons in those times were nothing else but expositions of some part of the scriptures which had been read before, and exhortations to the people to obey the doctrine contained in them; and commonly were upon the lesson which was last read, because that being freshest in the people's memory, was most proper to be treated of, as St. *Austin* both avers the *custom*, and gives the reason*." *Origen*, *Chrysostom*, and *Austin* were highly distinguished for their *expositions*; and

* Prim. Christ. part i. p. 278.

since the reformation, many eminent protestants have laudably copied their example. As an additional authority for what I have advanced under this and the preceding head, concerning *catechising*, I shall subjoin the following passage from Bishop Burnet, in which he advises the clergy, "To catechize the youth much at church, not only asking the questions and hearing the answers, but joining to that, the explaining the terms in other words, and by turning to the Bible for such passages as prove or enlarge on them; the doing this constantly (he observes) would infuse into the next age a higher measure of knowledge than the present is like to be blessed with." To which he adds: "Long sermons, in which points of divinity or morality are regularly handled, are above the capacity of the people; short and plain ones upon large portions of scripture, would be better hearkened to, and have a much better effect; they would make the hearers understand and love the scriptures more *."

* Conclusion of the History of his own Times.

that what has been said upon the utility of expositions is meant to exclude a frequent simple reading of the scriptures, which, if done with seriousness and propriety, may often prove both more instructive and edifying, than if attended with the best human comment or application.

4. *Another object of great importance to the prosperity of the church, is the due regulation of her public prayer and psalmody.* The Jewish temple is by *Isaiah*, and after him, by our *Saviour*, eminently styled *the house of prayer;* and we cannot suppose that christian churches ought to be less answerable to the same title. It must therefore be regarded as a strong symptom of public declension among christians, when prayer constitutes but a small part of their religious worship, or is performed in a cold or negligent manner. The case was very different during that happy period in which the church retained a considerable degree of her primitive purity; the prayers then offered up in her assemblies were both copious and fervent, *de pectore sine monitore*, (from the heart without a monitor) as *Tertullian*

speaks *; or according to *Justin Martyr*, οση δυναμις, *(to the utmost degree of ability †).* "When we come to the public worship of God," says the former of these apologists, "we come in as formidable array, as if we meant to storm heaven by our prayers, and such violence is most grateful to the Almighty ‡." All this was performed, either standing erect, with uplifted eyes, and hands stretched out towards heaven, or humbly upon their knees; but never in that *sitting* posture, by which many in these times express more of irreverence than of devotion.

Nor were the primitive christians less distinguished for their hymns and spiritual songs, than for the supplicatory part of their devotion. The passage in Pliny is well known, where he acquaints the emperor Trajan with their custom of assembling before day-break, to sing together a hymn to Christ as God §. And there is abundant

* Apol. c. 30. † Apol. 87.

‡ "Coimus in cætum et congregationem, ut ad Deum, quasi manu factâ, precationibus ambiamus orantes. Hæc vis Deo grata est." *Apol.* c. 39.

§ "Soliti stato die ante lucem convenire, carmenque

evidence from ecclesiastical history, that *singing* had a large share in the common service of the church at that period; the *clerk* or *precentor* was not left to sing alone, but the whole congregation, like the bands of angels described in Milton,

"Responsive*, or in full harmonic choir,"

united in thanksgivings and praises to their Creator and Redeemer. Thus were the devotions of the church warmed and elevated, and her numbers multiplied; for there is scarce any thing more attractive of an audience than an animated performance of this part of divine worship. And here might it not be inquired, whether it is not this, among other causes, that draws away multitudes to the meetings of separatists

Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem." Lib. x. Ep. 97.

* What Pliny says of the christians, that they were used to sing *secum invicem*, some have interpreted, *alternately* or in *responses*, which was undoubtedly a custom early introduced into the church. The passage referred to in Milton, is here varied and accommodated to the occasion.

from our national church at this day; and whether it does not demand her most zealous endeavour, by every proper method, and especially by cherishing a spirit of true devotion, to throw more *life* into her psalmody, as into every other part of her public service?

5. Further: The prosperity of the church depends, in no small degree, on a proper exercise of discipline: by which is not to be understood any compulsory methods; for such are alien from the very nature of religion, which, as *Tertullian* of old observed, "is a thing to be embraced voluntarily, and not enforced by outward violence*." The arms of the church are *spiritual;* admonition, suspension, or, in the last resort, excommunication, are her weapons; and in their due exercise consists that discipline, without which, no church can long retain either her purity or peace. The holy and profane, the clean and unclean, are incapable of a lasting and amicable con-

* "Nec religionis est cogere religionem, quæ sponte suscipi debeat, non vi." TERT. ad Scapulam.

junction; either the one will bring over, or expel the other; or they must continue together in a state of perpetual contention. Some leaven of depravity, and some seeds of discord will indeed be found in the most perfect society in this world, which shows, that in ecclesiastical, as in all other governments, what cannot be prevented or remedied, must be endured; lest, as our Saviour speaks, by endeavouring to *pluck up the tares, the wheat also should be destroyed:* but this is no argument for a tolerance without all exception or limitation, which would seem to be equally inconsistent with that article of our creed in which we profess to believe the holy *catholic church;* with the general tenor of the New Testament; and with the following passage in particular: "*I wrote to you,*" says St. Paul to the Corinthians, "*not to company with fornicators. Yet not altogether with fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a*

railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?"* This apostolic regulation appears to have been observed with a degree of strictness, approaching to severity, for some succeeding ages. *Cyprian,* who lived in the third century, informs us, that not only *flagitious sins (gravissima et extrema delicta)* but also others of less aggravation *(minora delicta)* were subjected to the censures of the church †. Some offenders were left for two, four, ten,

* 1 Cor. v. 9-13.

† *Sir Peter King*, in his *Enquiry into the Constitution, &c. of the Primitive Church*, to the question, *For what faults were offenders censured?* answers, "For schism, heresy, covetousness, gluttony, fornication, adultery, and for *all other sins whatsoever*, none excepted;" and in proof, cites *Origen*, *Cyprian*, and *Eusebius*; "Nay," says he, "the holy and good men of those days were so zealous against sin, that they used the strictest severities against the least appearances of it; not indulging or sparing the least branch of its pestiferous production, but smartly punishing the least sprout of it, its lesser acts, as well as those that were more scandalous and notorious." Part i. p. 111.

or twenty years in a state of penitence; and before they were restored to their former privileges, it was usual for them to attend at the door of the sanctuary, and there, upon their knees, to entreat the prayers of the faithful, with every mark of sorrow and contrition. Thus careful were the first christians to vindicate the purity and honour of their profession, and, as *Origen* expresses it, *to retain none but persons of wisdom and sobriety in the bonds of their communion* *.

I shall close this topic, by observing, nearly in the words of a grave and learned divine, when treating on the same subject: That nothing now remains but to admire and imitate the piety and integrity of the first ages of the christian church; their hatred of sin; their care and zeal, by means of a holy discipline, to maintain that strictness and purity of manners, which had rendered their religion so renowned and triumphant; a discipline, whose loss has long

* Ημεις γαρ οση δυναμις παντα πραττομεν υπερ των Φρονιμων ανδρων γενεσθαι τον συλλογον ημων. Contr. Cels. lib. iii.

been felt by the christian world, and which our own church in particular both acknowledges and laments. *In the primitive church,* says the preface to the Commination, *there was a godly discipline, that at the beginning of Lent, such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin, were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord; and that others, admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend; which discipline it is much to be wished might again be restored* *.

6. After the church has attended to her doctrine, and to her mode of instruction, worship, and discipline; her work will still remain imperfect, without a provision of fit men to carry her plans into execution. What is necessary to constitute this fitness, I shall touch in a few particulars.

First, they must be *good* men. The observation of *Quintilian*, that to be an orator it is necessary to be a good man †, is more clearly applicable to a minister of the gos-

* See Cave's Prim. Chris. part iii. at the close.

† Quintil. inst. lib. xii. cap. 1.

pel; to a due discharge of whose office, a sanctity of character is an indispensable qualification. I do not say, that the want of this qualification would invalidate all his ministrations, or nullify the efficacy of the christian sacraments; I must say, however, what I think none will deny, that it would be sure to weaken, if not entirely to destroy, the good effect of his personal addresses, whether public or private. There is usually a chilling and deadening spirit which attends the best instructions, and the most seraphic sentiments, from unhallowed lips; as, on the other hand, the ordinary discourse, and even the silence, of a truly good man, will shed around him a secret and salutary influence. To insist further on so obvious a point would be superfluous; every one is sensible, that the effect of good counsel depends in a great measure on his character who gives it; that, from a bad man it commonly meets with little or no regard; whilst, from one of an opposite character, and of whose wisdom and sincerity we are persuaded, it seldom fails to produce a happy correspondent impression.

Secondly: To piety must be added *zeal* and *warmth of address.* It is not enough to employ a bare exposition of sound doctrine, accompanied with a gentle expostulation; something more animated is necessary to attract and fix the general attention. Men must be carried beyond a cold approbation; they must be made to feel what they are taught; they must have heat together with light; and if the church supply not the former as well as the latter, they will seek it elsewhere. They will resort to the meeting or the conventicle, where the fervency of the preacher kindles a similar ardour in their own bosoms; and where they find themselves generally engaged, and often, as we may hope, edified. And should the orthodox established pastor be offended or grieved at such a preference, the remedy lies open before him; let him add proportionable zeal and earnestness to his other good qualities, and then he will have no cause to apprehend any inconvenience on the score of competition.

Thirdly: To piety and zeal must be joined *ability.* I have put this in the third place,

because, in the ministerial office, the two former, with a moderate share of the last, may be of good service; whereas, the most eminent ability without zeal, will, in general, do little; and, without piety, will do nothing. As a *principal* it is of small value; as an *auxiliary*, it may be of great and important use. It may serve to correct the prejudices of some, who consider religion as nothing more than a fruit of ignorance or hypocrisy; it may command respect and attention, and procure for truth an audience, which it would not otherwise obtain; it may repel those cavils and objections, which might be an overmatch for a less-instructed piety, and thus prove a defence to the common faith. But the use of ministerial ability which I have here chiefly in view, is to apply the general doctrines of religion to the particular state and circumstances of a congregation, or of individuals; to draw them down to *cases of conscience;* and bring them home to men's business and bosoms. Without this skill, a preacher may indeed exhort well, and stir up his hearers to the inquiry, *What shall we do?* but he will not

soundly resolve the question. "'Tis an easy thing," says Lord Bacon, "to call out for the observance of the sabbath, or to speak against unlawful gain; but what actions and works may be done upon the sabbath, what not; and what courses of gain are lawful, and in what cases; to set this down, and to clear the whole matter, with good distinctions and decisions, is a work of great knowledge and labour, that requires much meditation, conversing with the scriptures, and other helps, which God has provided and preserved for instruction *."

Lastly: to the office of a *public teacher* must be added that of a *pastor*, who is diligent *to know the state of his flock*; who, *instant in season and out of season*, not only ministers to the congregation, but from *house to house*; enters into familiar converse with individuals; inquires into their religious circumstances, their wants, and dangers; and affords them that appropriate counsel, reproof, or encouragement, of which they stand in need. In a word, *he watches for their souls*

* Bacon's Works, by Shaw, vol. ii. p. 304.

as one who must give account * ; and to facilitate the course of his spiritual labours, and promote their great end, endeavours, by every means in his power, to minister relief to their temporal necessities, and thus to give them an intelligible proof of his sincere regard for their welfare. A shepherd who in this manner *cares for the sheep*, will probably have seldom cause to complain, either that they desert his fold, or stray into other pastures.

II. The next rule to be observed by the church, in order to support herself under a complete toleration, is, *Not forwardly to set up any claims of superior purity or authority to other churches, either in respect of doctrine, worship, government, or discipline; and to maintain none after they have been proved to be either unjust or dubious; nor, lastly, to assert even those that are the most indisputably just and well-founded, with a disproportioned or unhallowed zeal.*

1. There are few things which men are

* Heb. xiii. 17.

generally more disposed to resist than pretensions and claims of superiority. That pre-eminence in which they would acquiesce, or, at least, which they would silently suffer, if unobtrusive; they will be forward to oppose, when it comes with a demand of formal acknowledgment. Ambitious men, who know the world, are aware of this; they have therefore no pretensions, and forbear any display of their advantages whether natural or acquired, which might excite the envy or wound the vanity of others. And what these do merely from worldly policy, good and wise men will do from motives of christian prudence and charity; and particularly when rivals or competitors are in question, by whom any lofty airs or challenges are soonest felt, and most promptly resented.

2. The same considerations may be extended to communities, whether civil or religious, and especially to the latter. There have been ages when the most extravagant claims of the church have been admitted, and her most despotic mandates obeyed, without inquiry or demur. Those ages are

past. The pope no longer thunders from the *Vatican*, and awes the world into submission. The decrees of the most celebrated councils are not known, or not considered; and the most legitimate authorities are treated with little respect. In this state of general opinion, and without the most pressing necessity, it would seem extremely unwise and impolitic for the church either to revive old or advance new pretensions, which she might know certainly beforehand would seldom be attended to, and which she has no power to enforce.

3. It may further be observed, that, in the first instance, a general presumption lies against all extraordinary claims; and, on this account, that the opposition which is commonly made to them (though previous to examination) is not absolutely unreasonable. They are marks by which the weakest persons, as well as the weakest causes, are particularly distinguished. In this kind of competition, the empiric, the pedant, and the sophist, will far outstrip the skilful physician, the able scholar, and the profound philosopher. The same observation is ap-

plicable to bodies of men, ecclesiastical as well as civil. Hence, the high claims of the Romish church afford the protestants one of their most legitimate presumptions against her. From her claim of right to an absolute dictatorial authority, we presume the contrary; from her claim to apostolic purity in her faith, worship, government, and discipline, we presume upon her corruption in each; from her denial of salvation to those who are without her pale, we presume it to be peculiarly hazardous to be found within it. Thus by her ambitious or fanatical endeavours to exalt herself above other churches, she supplies them, and her adversaries in general, with a forcible plea against herself.

4. Lastly, *pretensions provoke inquiry.* This is the case with pretenders in the ordinary course of the world; many will put them to the proof; and if they cannot make good their vaunting, they must be content to suffer the disgrace arising from ignorance or presumption. The like happens in religion, both in respect to individuals and to societies. A church, by challenging supe-

riority to other churches, naturally awakens their jealousy, and incites them to a narrow and rigorous scrutiny into the grounds of such a preference; and if these be found doubtful or insufficient, some of the following consequences will be likely to ensue: either the claimant church will retract, which is rarely to be expected in such a case, and might produce a triumph on the other side; or she will continue to assert her pretensions, notwithstanding all that is alleged against them; which would not only sink her credit still more with the other churches, and further increase their estrangement and opposition, but might also lessen her interest with that numerous division of the public who are merely lookers-on; as such persons are commonly disposed to favour the weaker, especially if it be, at the same time, the injured party. And perhaps in the opinion of the more inquisitive and learned, who bring both the parties to a trial before the tribunal of scripture and primitive antiquity, they might equally suffer a degradation. To which might be added, the scandal occasioned by such contentions, and the irre-

verence they are sure to breed in many persons towards religion in general.

We now proceed to a few remarks on the latter part of the rule here laid down; namely, *That the church should forbear to assert her pretensions, however just and well-founded they may be, with a disproportionate or an unhallowed zeal.*

1. It often happens to the church, as to other societies, that her pretensions are not so much resisted because they are absolutely unjust, as because more stress is laid upon them than they deserve. Where this undue estimation is perceived, it creates a prejudice against the pretensions themselves, or strengthens that which previously existed. Suppose a church to give a decided preference to episcopal government, not considering it as absolutely essential to her being, but as conducive to her well-being; not as indispensably necessary, but expedient; and this chiefly in respect to her own edification, without any positive determination as to other churches; it is almost impossible, that a preference thus qualified should occasion any contest or animosity. But if she

assert such a government to be *of divine right*, and set up a claim which nullifies the sacraments and administrations of other churches, she must expect to encounter the most violent opposition. On the other hand, should a church, on account of the parity of her ministers, exalt herself above other churches, and look down on the episcopal order, in its most primitive state, as something popish and anti-christian; she could hardly fail, by such an extravagance, to diminish her credit with all impartial bystanders. Again: For a church to prefer her own form of prayer, to the forms or extempore prayer of other churches, is natural and allowable; and provided she have the prudence not to extol it as the only acceptable, or the most perfect mode of worship, it may pass without obloquy or discord. And, lastly, to specify one instance more: When a church, to the due observation of the Lord's day, adds other days in commemoration of the first propagators of christianity, or of its principal events, and considers this as an advantage which gives her a superiority over those churches that

neglect to use it, she will probably be exposed to no censure on this account from her worst enemies, or, at least, she will have no cause to fear it; provided she is careful to improve such observances to their proper ends, and not to over-rate them.

2. In the second place, the church must be careful to avoid an *unhallowed*, no less than a disproportionate zeal. She must learn *to speak the truth in love*, and to recommend her pretensions by the temperate and candid manner in which they are proposed. The best cause, when an angry vehemence, or the infusion of any other ill temper, mingles in its defence, suffers an odium, which the most powerful arguments are not always able to remove; and when the cause thus defended involves superior claims, which, in the first instance, as we have seen, naturally raise opposition, the prejudice excited against it may then become absolutely invincible. It therefore highly concerns every church that has pretensions, be they ever so solid and important, if she wish to draw strangers within her own pale, and to live peaceably with the rest, to be mild and

conciliating in her manner; she must *not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth* *.

III. The last rule we have stated as necessary, in the present case, to be observed by the church, is, *To prescribe reasonable terms both of clerical and lay communion.*

Under this head we shall first offer a few remarks on clerical subscription.

1. A perfect coincidence of opinion between only two persons, upon any one topic, should it be a little out of the common road, is rare; but in respect of those various articles which compose the creed of any particular church, is morally impossible. All that can be expected, in this case, is an approximation; so as to be substantially agreed in things necessary, to exercise forbearance in the rest, and charity in all; or to make such approaches to each other as may afford a sufficient ground for mutual

* 2 Tim. ii. 24-5.

peace and edification; since, after all that can be done, shades of difference will still remain, which can only be fully dissipated in that world of light, *where we shall know even as we are known.*

To require therefore a complete unity of sentiment in all the members of a church, is nugatory; and to pretend it is fallacious. To draw up a number of articles, some of them upon the most abstruse points in divinity, with a declared design to prevent diversity of opinion, and to establish consent touching true religion, is the most Utopian of all projects; if such a declaration be meant so rigorously as to exclude the least variety of apprehension. Far less extravagant was the fancy of the emperor Charles the Fifth, when he proposed to bring a multitude of clocks and watches to keep exact time with one another. To have brought these machines so near to perfection as to answer all the useful purposes of life, would have been laudable; an attempt to bring them nearer was a point of vain and fruitless curiosity. In like manner to establish such a degree of *consent* touchin

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true religion as is necessary to present peace and final salvation, is an object of much importance, and we hope not totally impracticable; more than this may justly be considered as neither practicable, nor, if attained, of any great moment or advantage *.

2. Hence it may appear, that all which can reasonably be proposed by such a formulary of doctrine as we have above described, is, not absolutely to preclude every diversity of opinion, which, as we have observed, is impossible, but to confine this diversity within certain limits; not to fix one precise and indivisible sense to the arti-

* "Il y a de certaines idées d'uniformité, qui saisissent quelquefois les grands esprits, mais qui frappent infailliblement les petits. Ils y trouvent un genre de perfection qu'ils reconnoissent, parce qu'il est impossible de ne le pas decouvrir; les mêmes poids dans la police, les mêmes mesures dans la commerce, les mêmes loix dans l'etât, la même religion dans toutes ses parties. Mais cela est-il toujours à propos sans exception?—Et la grandeur du génie ne consisteroit-elle mieux à scavoir, dans quels cas il faut de l'uniformité et dans quels cas il faut des differences?"

MONTESQ. de l'esprit des loix. Liv. xxix. ch. 18.

cles, but to pronounce them with a latitude which may both consist with substantial truth, and afford a due allowance to human misapprehension and infirmity; and especially, which may lessen, if not entirely prevent, the extreme danger of prevarication. To do this effectually, the language employed must be general, or such as may express, without doing it violence, the various meanings, or the various modifications of meaning, intended to be permitted; and this intention must be conveyed in a clear and unequivocal manner. Without these precautions, or without some mental reservation or exception, the compiler, I fear, must be content to subscribe his own articles alone; and from the variable state of the human mind, and the perpetual change of its views and perceptions, it is probable that even he himself could not subscribe them *ex animo*, and in every jot and tittle, for two days together; though, as to the substance, and what they contained essential to faith and practice, he might hold them very uniformly, and with increasing attachment, to the end of life.

3. Whether the above precautions are sufficiently regarded in the creed of any modern church (for I omit the more ancient) may perhaps be fairly questioned. They are certainly not so regarded in those churches (if there be any such) that profess to establish their articles of faith according to one precise exclusive meaning; in which, however orthodox that meaning may be, it is morally impossible, as we have more than once noted, for any two persons, and consequently for ten, or ten thousand, exactly to coincide. Nor are they so regarded by those churches, in which a latitude of judgment is rather a matter of connivance than of express permission; or in which this latitude is not so clearly and distinctly defined and expressed, as to leave no ground of reasonable doubt to the subscriber, whether his subscription falls within the prescribed limits. In the former case, no room is left for subscription at all; in the latter, it must often be ambiguous and captious, and ensnaring to the subscriber's conscience. This deceitful ambiguity has been charged by protestants on the council of Trent,

which, under a pretence of unity, determined several points of doctrine in a manner so equivocal, as to leave ample room for a diversity of interpretations; a policy which, however favourable it might be to the power of the church that was thus left at liberty to decree and act as she found most convenient, could afford but little satisfaction to those individuals, who wished to reconcile their subscription with their sincerity.

4. The two most obvious inconveniences, and which must occur to every one, in the matter of subscription to those *formularies of faith* which are drawn up with too much curiosity, are, first, that many candidates for orders subscribe at a period when they must be incompetent to judge of intricate points of theology *. And, secondly, that though they should, at the time, subscribe

* It was formerly, I believe, usual with some colleges in our universities, to require subscription to the *thirty-nine articles* from boys of fourteen or sixteen years of age, upon their being matriculated; a practice, wherever it is found, which deserves the most unqualified reprobation.

intelligently and *ex animo,* they may afterwards alter their opinion; if not essentially, and in respect to fundamental truth, at least in many particulars, to which they could no longer yield *an unfeigned assent and consent,* as being perfectly agreeable to the doctrine of scripture. How to prevent this latter inconvenience I know not, unless the subscribers could engage for the future as well as for the present; according to a decree of the reformed churches in France, A. D. 1612, by which, every candidate for orders was required to make the following declaration: "I receive and approve all that is contained in the confession of faith of the reformed churches of this nation, and promise to persevere therein to my life's end, and never to believe or teach any thing not conformable to it *." Or, according to another decree of the same churches, A. D. 1620, by which the subscriber binds himself in yet stronger terms, as follows: "I swear and promise before God, and this holy as-

* See preface to Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History.

sembly, that I receive, approve, and embrace all the doctrine taught and decided by the national synod of *Dort*.—I swear and promise that I will persevere in it all my life long, and defend it with all my power, and never depart from it in my sermons, college lectures, writings, or conversation, or in any other manner, public or private. I declare also and protest, that I reject and condemn the doctrine of the *Arminians*, because, &c. So help me God, as I swear all this without equivocation or mental reservation *." How these good men could bring themselves either to take or require so extravagant an oath, I shall not examine; certainly they must have been *free-willers* of no ordinary quality, notwithstanding all their zeal against the *Arminians*, ever to have dreamt of such an engagement. There are few however who can be supposed willing to undertake to such an extent, or who, if thus rashly engaged, would be able, with all their efforts, entirely

* See preface to Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History.

to avoid that embarrassment which must be felt by an honest subscriber, upon such a change in his opinions as will not strictly stand with the terms of his engagement. When this, together with the preceding observations, is considered by the reader, he will the less wonder to hear Bishop Burnet express himself in the following manner: "The requiring subscription to the thirty-nine articles is a great imposition: I believe them myself; but as those about *original sin* and *predestination* might be expressed more unexceptionably, so I think it is a better way, to let such matters continue to be still the standard of doctrine, with some few corrections, and to censure those who teach any contrary tenets, than to oblige all that serve in the church to subscribe them. The greater part subscribe without ever examining them; and others do it because they must do it, though they can hardly satisfy their consciences about some things in them. Churches and societies are much better secured by laws than by subscriptions; it is a more reasonable,

as well as a more easy method of government *."

5. The bishop's concluding remark, on the substitution of laws in the place of subscriptions, appears solid and important. But should it still be thought expedient to retain the latter, it would seem not very difficult to devise some form of subscription much less exceptionable than those which are at present in use, and which would as effectually answer every good end proposed by such a measure. Why might not the following, or some equivalent form, be thought generally sufficient?

"I believe that the *holy scriptures*, as they are commonly received among protestants, contain all things necessary to salvation; *so that, whatsoever is not read therein, nor proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation* †.

* Bishop Burnet's conclusion to the History of his own Times.

† The words in *italics* are from the sixth article of the church of England.

And I declare my sincere intention, seriously to study the sacred scriptures, and to instruct the people in the same, according to my best abilities."

Should the question respect an admission to minister in the church of England in particular, why might not the following, or some similar declaration, be thought satisfactory? "I am persuaded that the doctrine of the church of England is so pure and orthodox, that whosoever believes it, and lives according to it, shall be saved; and that there is no error in it, which may necessitate any man to disturb the peace, or renounce the communion of it*." When Bishop *Sanderson*, who was a good man, and a skilful casuist, was consulted upon this *formula* by some divines who proposed it, as one to which they were willing to agree, he answered, "I never subscribed in any other sense myself." Or why might not *Chillingworth's* form of subscription be admitted, as expressed in these words? "I do verily believe the church of England a

* Life of Chillingworth, by Des Maizeaux.

true member of the church (universal); that she wants nothing necessary to salvation, and holds nothing repugnant to it *." Either of these forms might be thought sufficiently high for any church that makes no claim to infallibility, and might help to relieve the scruples of some wise and good men.

As what has been advanced under this head is so easily applicable to those points of clerical subscription, which relate either to *forms of prayer*, or to other *offices* of religion, I forbear to enter upon them; and shall hasten to close this section, after a word or two on *lay-communion*.

Though our established clergy may have cause to complain of the hard terms imposed upon them, this is not the case with the adult among the laity, who are almost indiscriminately admitted to the most solemn ordinance of christianity, upon the easy condition of compliance with one indifferent ceremony. Whatever be their faith or practice, their principles or conduct, they are

* Life of Chillingworth, by Des Maizeaux.

at liberty, not only to attend to the public prayers and instructions of the national church, which is reasonable and proper, but also to approach her altars, and there to receive at her hands the memorials of the death of our Redeemer; provided they will consent to receive them in a kneeling posture. Let this condition be observed, and it is extremely rare that any inquiry is made, whether the communicant be a saint or a profligate, a believer or an infidel. This laxity, so remote from the primitive practice, can hardly fail to reflect some dishonour on any church where it is suffered; to cause some alienation or regret in her more serious members; and to breed in others a neglect, if not a contempt, of all religion. Nor is our own church insensible to this danger, as appears from her *commination office*, where, as we have already remarked, she laments the want of *that godly discipline*, which was exercised in the first and best ages of christianity. Whether indeed it would be expedient (supposing the possibility) to revive this discipline in its whole extent, might be justly disputed.

There is certainly in this, as in most other things, an extreme of rigour, as well as the contrary; and it is the part of wise men to find out that medium, which in the existing circumstances of the church and of the world, is most favourable to peace and edification.

A national church, formed according to the above rules—in her doctrine sound and evangelical, equally remote from a dry heathen morality and a wild enthusiasm, from Pharisaic confidence and Antinomian presumption;—in her instruction of children familiar and catechetical;—in her public teaching, plain and expository;—in her worship, pure and devotional;—in her discipline, strict without rigour;—in her ministers, exhibiting her pastoral care, as well as her aptitude to teach;—in her pretensions, reserved and modest;—in her conduct towards other churches, candid and liberal;—and, in the last place, in her terms of admission to her communion, moderate without laxity; neither so narrow as to make it difficult for wise and good men to enter without some wound to their conscience, nor

so wide, as to allow an easy ingress to the profane and the profligate.—A church that bears these characters, and answers to this description, can have nothing to fear from the most complete toleration; she would have few separatists from her communion, at least, few of such as *held the faith in a pure conscience;* and as to the conventicles of heresy and schism, they would have no other effect, than to draw off those noxious humours and inflammable spirits, which, if retained, would only have served to corrupt her purity, or disturb her peace.

CHRISTIAN POLITICS.

PART III.

ON THE CONDUCT OF A GOOD CITIZEN, PARTICULARLY UNDER ANY MODERATE GOVERNMENT.

AS without some degree of conformity between our interior dispositions and our external circumstances, there can be no contentment, it is evident, we can only attain this blessing by bringing our circumstances to our liking, or the contrary; and as the former method is generally impracticable, we must either succeed by the latter, or probably be left to struggle through life with bitterness and sorrow.

Man, finding himself ill at ease, and not

understanding the true ground of his complaint, is ready to resolve it, as before remarked, into some unhappiness or defect in his exterior condition; hence it usually happens, that to remove, one after another, the grievances that press hardest upon him, and to multiply his amusements and pleasures, are the two great objects to which he first directs his endeavours; though commonly, as might be foreseen, with little advantage to his real comfort. Perhaps, in a more advanced stage of life, willing to persuade himself that public measures are the sources of private misery, he commences a reformer of laws and government; and continues to urge his remonstrances, and to form his projects, till after many ineffectual attempts to mend the world, and reduce it to his plans of political perfection, he at last finds it wisest to bear with patience what he cannot remedy.

Hence it appears, that to gain a just view of what is attainable in our present state, is a point of the greatest consequence; as we cannot otherwise properly regulate our behaviour towards others, or avoid ourselves

those many vexations and disappointments, to which visionary theorists and adventurers, and those who listen to them, are continually liable.

We therefore lay down the following as primary rules of conduct to be observed by a good citizen, particularly under any moderate government.

I. To guard against any wrong impressions he might receive from new and plausible political theories; and to regulate his expectations by what is obvious and practicable in the present state of human nature, and the existing circumstances of public affairs.

II. To distinguish real political evils from imaginary ones, and from those various evils which arise out of the common condition of man in this world: also, Not to aggravate or rashly oppose the first; to dismiss the second; and to suffer patiently the last.

III. To avoid an idle curiosity in political matters; and still more a disposition to hunt after small or unknown grievances.

IV. To beware of any unnecessary or

hasty attachment, and still more of a blind devotion, to any party whatever, either in politics or religion.

V. Lastly: Never forwardly to urge his public claims or pretensions, nor beyond what the common good may require; and when this, on the whole, is provided for, to rest satisfied in the quiet and faithful discharge of the duties of his present station.

That the reader may be duly sensible of the reason and expediency of these rules, I shall endeavour to illustrate them at some length in the five following sections.

SECTION I.

On the first Rule of Conduct to be observed by every good Citizen, namely, *To guard against any wrong Impressions he might receive from new and plausible political Theories; and to regulate his Expectations by what is obvious and practicable in the present State of human Nature, and the existing Circumstances of public Affairs.*

A GENERAL presumption lies against all innovations and untried theories, and against none more than those which are of a political nature*. Hence, such experiments ought never to be practised upon a state without grave deliberation; as their success is always uncertain, and often extremely hazardous. The entire result of any change in the constitution and laws of

* "Of all undertakings, the most arduous, the most dangerous, and the most liable to miscarry, is the introduction of new laws." *Machiavel's Prince*, ch. 6.

a country, depends on such a multitude and variety of causes and circumstances, that it can never be exactly foreseen by the greatest human sagacity; and is sometimes widely different from all probable conjecture. Even the enacting of a single law, which is a measure that might be supposed within the reach of political calculation, often produces effects very different and remote from what was in contemplation by the legislator. "It hath been an ancient observation," says Blackstone, "in the laws of England, that whenever a standing rule of law, of which the reason perhaps cannot be remembered or discerned, hath been wantonly broken in upon by statute or new resolutions, the wisdom of the rule hath in the end appeared from the inconveniences that have followed the innovation*." This should inspire us with respect for established laws and usages, though the grounds upon which they were introduced be now unknown; and should teach us to regard with a prudent jealousy all such persons as appear

* *Blackstone's Comment.* vol. i. p. 70.

to be actuated by a spirit of political innovation.

This jealousy ought eminently to be directed against those who are not only dissatisfied with particular laws and institutions, but would have the whole civil state dissolved, all rank, and title, and property abolished, and the entire political system recomposed after a better model. To such enterprizing revolutionists, a good citizen might be supposed thus to address himself: Your ideas, it must be acknowledged, are bold, and bespeak the genius of modern philosophy. But do you understand clearly what you mean by a better model; and have you well considered, that it is often better to adapt the form to the matter, than with violence to reduce the matter to the form? Have you seriously counted the cost, and are you *sure* that the probable benefit is greater than the certain risk? If not, you are a dangerous projector; and had you power to enforce your speculations, might prove a fatal enemy to your country. To which he might add, that no prudent man would pull down his mansion,

the ancient residence of his family, and the admiration of all beholders, at the suggestion of some modish architect, *that it was old, that it was built at different periods, and therefore irregular, having some apartments too large, and others too small, with many winding and narrow passages;* if it was probable that, notwithstanding all its imperfections, a better would not be erected in its stead.

It is not meant by this to insinuate, that the political state of a country may not be such as to render a general revolution advisable, provided it can be accomplished without war and violence; nay, further, it might be allowed, that the necessity of the case may be so great and pressing, as to justify even a recourse to arms, after every gentler method had been tried without effect. Short of this unhappy necessity, a wise man will be disposed to sit down quietly, and make the best of the existing circumstances; while things remain tolerable he will be satisfied, as knowing that human life, in its ordinary tenor, admits of nothing more.

Another consideration which may help to

guard us against wrong impressions from Utopian projectors, is, that the question of laws and government ought to be determined by the relation they bear to the particular circumstances in which a people are placed. A nation during its youth, while simple manners prevail, and the principles of industry and frugality continue in vigour, requires much less wisdom to manage it than an old nation, refined to artificial life, and in possession of the objects which the other is striving to obtain. In this stage, it is hardly possible to recover a country to its sober habits, or to preserve it from the fatal consequences of inveterate vice and dissipation; and to charge upon the existing government all the evils which have been accumulating, perhaps, for ages, must be highly unreasonable and unjust. Moreover, to the moral situation of a people, must be added their political habits, which often dispose them to regard, with a favourable partiality, even the defects of the government they have been long under; which, therefore, on the whole, may suit them better than another theoretically more per-

fect *. And it is good for every man to cherish in himself and his fellow-citizens, a generous predilection for the political frame and constitution of his own country, without invidiously comparing it with that of others. As when Sir James Melvil was asked by Queen Elizabeth, whether herself or the Queen of Scots was the greater beauty; after a prudent pause upon so deli-

* " Rien ne parut plus insupportable aux Germains, que le tribunal de Varus. Celui que Justinien érigea chez les Laziens, pour faire le procés au meurtrièr de leur roi, leur parut une chose horrible et barbare. Mithridate haranguant contre les Romains, leur reproche sur-tout les formalités de leur justice. Les Parthes ne purent supporter ce roi, qui ayant été élevé à Rome se rendit affable, et accessible à tout le monde. La liberté même a paru insupportable à des peuples, qui n'etoient pas accoutumés à en jouir. C'est ainsi qu'un air pur est quelquefois nuisible à ceux qui ont vécu dans des païs marècageux.

" Un Venitien nommé Balbi, étant au Pégu, fut introduit chez le roi. Quand celui-ci apprit qu'il n'y avoit point de roi à Venise, il fit un si grand éclat de rire, qu'une toux le prit, et qu'il eut beaucoup de peine à parler à ses courtisans. Quel est le législateur qui pourroit proposer le governement populaire à des peuples pareils ?"

MONTESQ. liv. xix. ch. 2.

cate a question, replied, "Your majesty is the fairest woman in England, and my mistress in Scotland."

The British constitution has now for a considerable period been the object of zealous attachment at home, and of admiration abroad; after struggling through the obstructions of many ages, it attained at the revolution to a purity and vigour, which has given an energy before unknown to the exertions of a great nation, in manufactures and commerce, in arts and sciences; while every good citizen has reposed in security under its shadow. It must therefore be perfect madness, after such experience of its effects, to aim a blow at the root, and attempt its extirpation, instead of prudently endeavouring to lop away the decayed, or prune the luxuriant branches.

Another reason against Utopian politics, is the example of the Jewish nation. Never was there a people that had statutes and judgments so righteous, besides the privilege of consulting the divine oracle upon every extraordinary emergence. Never was there a civil constitution better calcu-

lated for perpetuity by periodical renovations *. No nation was ever so eminently the care of heaven, nor any other country so highly favoured with the bounties of nature, as the land of Judea. *A land,* says Moses, *of brooks of waters, of fountains, and depths that spring out of vallies and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil-olive and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass* †. Yet amidst all these blessings and advantages, both natural and political, *the people tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies, but turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers* ‡; they were ungrateful and rebellious, and in consequence became a prey to the sword of their enemies, and to other sore calamities.

If, then, the provisions made by infinite

* I scarce need to observe, that this refers to the sabbatical year, and the year of jubilee.

† Deut. viii. 7-9. ‡ Psal. lxxviii. 56, 57.

wisdom failed to secure the obedience and prosperity of a highly distinguished nation, what can be expected from the laws and regulations of men? If, under a theocracy, a perverse people brought distress and ruin upon themselves, we cannot wonder if the same should happen under the best human form and administration of government. Should you say, We are not Jews,—it is true,—but we are men; and therefore subject to like passions with other men, whether Jews or Gentiles.

It is granted, indeed, that a nation may sometimes be raised above its natural level, and a better order of things may commence, and proceed for a season; but this, I apprehend, is oftner to be ascribed to the ascendant genius of particular individuals, or to the influence of some extraordinary conjuncture, than to any plans of systematic policy: it is some patriot king, or some powerful and disinterested minister, who inspires a people with a fresh portion of public spirit; or a sense of common danger suspends private competitions and state factions, and unites all parties in a regard to the

general interest; or a people having emancipated themselves, and asserted their just rights and liberties, after a hard struggle against oppression, are borne on for a while under the generous impulsion of true patriotism; yet these causes being only transient and occasional, the selfish passions, which are sure always to be at work, though not always openly, will not fail to recover in the end their former influence.

This secret tendency to prefer the individual to the general interest, and which, I fear, is prevalent in the far greater part of the human race, should teach us (since no art can act beyond the capacity of the matter) not to expect too much from the wisest polity operating upon so untoward a subject as man. We should not expect legislators to be invested with the powers of Amphion, who, by the music of his harp, is said to have reared the walls of Thebis; nor imagine that the erection of a state is like the composition of a poem, in which the author is at liberty to cull or create his matter, and to work it up to the height of his genius; whereas the politician must take

his materials as he finds them, and be content to give them such forms as they are willing to receive.

Indeed had men no natural repugnance to reason, and to reasonable laws and government, as some have imagined; and would fall into their proper places in society at the voice of a wise legislation, and go on in the quiet discharge of their proper duties; then might we expect to see political fabrics rising in all the proportions of moral mathematics, whose duration would be commensurate with time itself. But the case is far otherwise; and has so been uniformly considered before the present times. "Political writers," says Machiavel, "have laid it down as a first principle, of which all history demonstrates the truth, that whoever would found a state, and enact proper laws for the government of it, must presuppose that all men are naturally corrupt, and will not fail to discover their depravity whenever a fair opportunity offers; for though it may possibly lie concealed awhile, on account of some secret reason which does not then appear to men of small

experience, yet time (which is therefore called the father of truth) commonly brings it to light in the end*" "Would to heaven," says Helvetius, "that virtue was our natural inheritance! What pleasure would it give me to find all men good! But by persuading them that they are good already, I should slacken their ardour to become so; I should call them good, and help to render them wicked†." It is this universal

* Polit. Disc. on Livy, 61. c. 3.—To the same purpose Hooker speaks in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*. "Laws politic, (says he) ordained for external order and regiment amongst men, are never framed as they should be, unless presuming the will of man to be inwardly obstinate, rebellious, and averse from all obedience to the sacred laws of his nature: in a word, unless presuming man to be in regard of his depraved mind, little better than a wild beast, they do accordingly provide notwithstanding so to frame his outward actions, that they be no hindrance to the common good, for which societies are instituted; unless they do this, they are not perfect." B. i. p. 85.

† Helv. de l'homme, sect. v. ch. 2.—Yet this natural privation of virtue is no insuperable difficulty in the way of modern policy, which, it seems, has every resource within itself; and can *teach virtue*, as well as govern the virtuous. Socrates, it is true, when he is introduced discoursing with Meno upon the question,

depravity, which deprives the government of sufficient means to carry the best laws into execution. "Give me," said Archi-

Whether virtue is capable of being taught? at length sums up the whole in this manner: "If," says he, "we have rightly conducted our inquiry, this is the conclusion; *that virtue is neither derived from nature nor instruction, but is a divine gift or allotment.*" It appears there were at that time certain sophists, who went about pretending to *teach virtue*, and this upon mere human principles; just as they would teach some secular art or science, without looking for any superior aid or assistance; these Socrates encountered in his usual way by argument and raillery; and was Socrates to rise again, he would doubtless encounter, in the same strain, those legislative sophists who have lately set up the same pretensions.

It might indeed be granted to these sages, if that was all they intended, that a certain kind and degree of virtue is producible by human institutions; but when they endeavour to substitute this in the place of that genuine virtue which is the offspring of religion, we must take the liberty to charge the attempt either upon their ignorance, or their design to impose upon their fellow-creatures in a point which most highly concerns them. *That* virtue which is learnt in the schools of human policy must partake of the baseness of its original, is neither much to be depended on in this world, nor is likely to meet with any recompense in another.

What is possible to be done, however, by civil regu-

medes, "where to place my engines, and I will move the earth." Was any part of society perfectly uncorrupt, it would afford a stable ground on which the powers of government might rest and act, with an energy and effect that has never yet been experienced. As things now are, no entirely sound part is to be found; *the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint*; the legislator and magistrate are of the same depraved mass with the people; and while they govern others, have need themselves to be controlled by the universal laws of reason and equity.

If, therefore, the situation of a country be such, as to afford redress for gross violations of liberty and property, and a comfortable subsistence for the honest and industrious, it is all that can be expected from political wisdom, operating in the most favourable circumstances.

lations, ought diligently to be endeavoured; they may powerfully restrain vice, though their influence be less in promoting virtue; and may remove many obstacles to piety, though its progress depends upon higher causes.

SECTION II.

On the second Rule to be observed by a good Citizen, namely, *To distinguish real political Evils from imaginary ones, and from those various Evils which arise out of the common Condition of Man in this World:* Also, *Not to aggravate or rashly oppose the First; to dismiss the Second; and to suffer patiently the Last.*

I. POLITICAL evils proceed either from inexpedient laws; from the abuse of power in the hands of magistrates, or of other executive officers; or from unseasonably permitting either the legislative or executive power to lie dormant. From these causes, under a weak or tyrannic government, a country may be reduced from opulence to beggary, from liberty to slavery, and from a high degree of temporal felicity to the most

abject state of wretchedness. Even under a wise and moderate government, these evils cannot always, and in every degree, be excluded; the necessary resources of a country may be impaired, or individual injuries sustained, by improvident laws and the abuse of power, notwithstanding every precaution on the part of the legislature, and the utmost care in selecting fit persons to carry its provisions into execution. An attempt to enumerate these evils would be endless and unnecessary, as every reader's reflection will easily supply him with instances more than sufficient.

To distinguish between imaginary political evils and such as are real, we shall recur to an axiom before established, namely, That the best possible state of civil society is, when the mass of its members can subsist comfortably with moderate labour, and cannot subsist without it; provided, at the same time, that the stability of this order of things be reasonably secured.

From this axiom it will follow, that in proportion as the state of a nation answers

to the description here given, all apprehensions of public grievances must, in the same proportion, be irrational and unfounded.

Let us endeavour to illustrate this in a few instances.

1. First, *in respect to the general state of commerce.* All political complaints upon this subject, in the circumstances now supposed, must, in the main, be groundless. They are the complaints of the merchant or manufacturer, in contrariety to the interest of the poor artizan; in other words, they are the complaints of the few, opposed to the interest of the many, whose new and imaginary wants, excited, in a progressive state of commerce, by an advance of wages, and the luxurious example of their superiors, would multiply faster than their means of supplying them; and, consequently, in no long time, must sink their relative situation below what it was before. It would be only the merchant and manufacturer, who, by increasing their wealth at such a prosperous period beyond their increased expences, would be able permanently to

establish themselves in a higher rank and station in society than they before had occupied.

2. All jealous apprehensions on the subject of national power or glory are, in the same circumstances, no less vain and visionary; they are the waking dreams of ambition, as the former were of avarice. To a prince or nation labouring under such a malady, might be recommended the well-known advice of *Cineas* to *Pyrrhus*, who, upon disclosing his project of conquering *Italy*, and then other countries in succession, till he had subdued a considerable part of the earth; at length, after the repeated question of *Cineas*, *And what then?* Why then, said *Pyrrhus*, we will sit down and enjoy ourselves. *And why not now?* was the sensible reply. And might we not with still stronger reason say to a prince or a people, who are already in possession of every solid political advantage, Why should a vain desire of extending your dominion and renown, tempt you, by provoking the envy or jealousy of other powers, to endanger your own stability,

and for the sake of a shadow, to run the risk of losing the substance?

3. All apprehensions of any material defects in the constitution of a government, under which the bulk of a people may live comfortably, as here stated, with moderate labour, must be imaginary. Let us suppose a government similar to that of our own, under which the people are in this situation; what charge could an imaginative citizen allege against it? He might perhaps object to its monarchical part, that it was liable to degenerate into military despotism; that it might plunge the country into unnecessary wars, and harass it by excessive imposts and cruel exactions; all which would hold against a pure monarchy; but, in the present case, the counteraction of the other branches of government would prevent such consequences. Or he might allege against the aristocracy, its unfavourable aspect upon the lower orders, by its legislative authority, and by the abuse of its peculiar privileges; which would be true, if left to rule alone; but not when combined with the other parts of

the constitution. Or, lastly, he might allege against the democratical part of the state, its tendency to generate dissentions, factions, and tumults, its exposure of the public counsels, or the delays it would interpose to their execution; all which, with many other dangers, form an insuperable objection against a pure democracy, but are of little force where the democratical part of the government is restrained and limited by the two others, as in our own happy constitution; which, by establishing a balance among the three powers, unites in it the advantages of each, and guards against the ill consequences that might grow out of their several defects. Thus are we in possession of that admirable political system, which *Tacitus* thought was rather to be applauded than hoped for, and which, if realized, could never be of long duration*; an opinion whose fallacy the inhabitants of this country have happily expe-

* "Cunctas nationes et urbes, populus, aut primores, aut singuli regunt. Delecta ex his et constituta reipublicæ formâ, laudari faciliùs quàm evenire; aut si evenit, haud diuturna esse potest." TAC. An. lib. iv. cap. 33.

rienced; and for a British citizen to listen to his fears in opposition to this experience, would be to listen to his imagination more than to his judgment. To say that it is a government short of perfection, is only to say that it is human; but its approach towards it is such, that every project to change it fundamentally, should be entertained according to an ancient law of Charondas, which decreed, *that every political innovator should appear before the public assembly with a rope about his neck, with which, if his project, after deliberation, was rejected, he should forthwith be suspended for his temerity**.

Lastly: Though the political grievances which exist in various parts of the world are numerous, and sometimes very difficult to be borne, yet, compared with the other evils which besiege human life on every side, they are few and inconsiderable. Wherever he is, man is exposed to sickness and death; to domestic cares and vicissitudes; to the unkindness and loss of friends, and the malice of enemies; to the torture of unruly

* Histoire Ancienne, par Rollin. Tom. iii. p. 399.

passions; and to those innumerable vexations, without name or description, which, like swarms of locusts, devour up all the verdure of his condition.

"How small of all that human hearts endure,
That part, which laws or kings can cause or cure."

In a word, man is troubled with a corrupt heart, and a guilty conscience, the greatest of all evils, and the sources of all the rest, which will pursue him through all governments, and from which he can find relief in none, except in that which is *not of this world.*

When we therefore feel dissatisfied with ourselves, or with others, and especially with our rulers, we ought carefully to inquire, whether it does not arise from those general causes, which act nearly with equal force under every administration of public affairs, unless it be one extreme and violent.

It is for want of such inquiry, that men in public stations frequently suffer under the most unjust charges, and, in particular, that the prime minister of this country

(which one instance may serve for all) often meets with a treatment similar to what the primitive christians experienced from the pagans, who, as Tertullian informs us, charged them as the meritorious causes of every calamity that befel the empire. "If the *Tiber* overflowed its banks, or the *Nile* did not; if the heavens withheld their showers, or the earth trembled under their feet; if famine or pestilence wasted the city or the provinces, the cry immediately was, *Away with the christians to the lions* *." In like manner, a British premier is not only made accountable for disastrous political events, such as unsuccessful wars or negotiations, or for a depressed state of manufactures or commerce; but also for a scarcity of bread, or of other articles of human subsistence; as if he was responsible even for the course of nature, or had engaged, upon his assuming the reins of government, (as the *Mexican* emperors are said to have done at

* "Si Tiberis ascendit in mœnia, si Nilus non ascendit in arva, si cælum stetit, si terra movit, si fames, si lues, statim christianos ad leonem." Apol. cap. 40.

their coronation *) that there should be no barren years, nor other natural disorders during his administration. This confusion of political and physical causes, so frequent in the minds of the populace, and which is the more easy, as they are often found combined in the same events, affords no small advantage to an artful demagogue for working on the fears or discontent of the simple and less-informed citizen, who is thus led to charge entirely upon his governors, what is chiefly the effect of nature; and through a mistaken apprehension of political grievances to quarrel with divine providence.

II. We now proceed to the second part of the rule, namely, *Not to aggravate or rashly oppose real political evils; to dismiss imaginary ones; and, lastly, to bear patiently those*

* "Le roi du Mexique promettoit par un serment solemnel, lorsqu'il etoit couronné, que le soleil seroit toujours clair et serein, que les nuées ne repandroient leurs pluies qu'a propos, et que la terre produiroit ses fruits en abondance." *Traité de l'Opinion*, par le Gendre, tom. iii. p. 713-14.

evils which arise out of the common condition of man in this world.

1. If we consider with the least attention the difficulty of a wise legislation, to how many objects and circumstances, both immediate and remote, it is necessary to have respect in framing laws, we shall be slow to determine upon their merits; and, though they should fail of the end intended, shal never load them with aggravated censure. This moderation is strongly enforced by the remark of *Blackstone* (before cited) "That a standing rule of law, whose reason was forgot, or could not at present be discerned, was seldom set aside or altered by statute, but the inconvenience of the change afterwards appeared;" which should teach us that, in the regulation of human affairs, it is experience rather than theory, which is the great source of practical wisdom; and that we are not authorized to infer from laws which, upon trial, are found inexpedient, any particular defect of ability or good intention in the legislators; who perhaps did all that could be done upon the grounds of human foresight and probability.

And if this modesty be proper in our private censures, it is still more so in our public complaints and remonstrances, which ought never to appear till after a respectful interval; and then in the most peaceable and regular manner. Every thing like intimidation should studiously be avoided, which would only tend, either to exasperate our superiors and to confirm the grievance, or to weaken the general authority of government.

The same considerations are no less applicable to the actual administration of public affairs. The grounds of executive measures, whether relative to war or peace, often lie equally remote from the eye of the common citizen with those upon which proceed the acts of the legislature; and to condemn them before they are known, or before they have had a fair trial, is manifestly unjust. Nay, though they should fail in the trial, it would remain still to be inquired, whether the failure arose from any culpable defect in the measures themselves, or from that general uncertainty of events, against which no human wisdom

can absolutely provide. No one is ignorant, though few make allowance accordingly, that the winds and waves, with other innumerable contingencies of nature; the treachery of a commander; a sudden panic; or the least unforeseen accident, may defeat the best-concerted plans. The little time afforded for deliberation is also, in the present case, another and a particular reason for allowance; the emergence may be such as will suffer no delay, which seldom happens in the business of legislation. Besides, (which should further increase our tenderness) those who actually steer the vessel of the state are most exposed to public animadversion; every coffee-house is a tribunal before which they are summoned, and by which, without trial or evidence, they are often unmercifully condemned. To which may be added, the jealous ambition and ever-wakeful envy of their competitors, who lose no opportunity to detect and expose every fault or mistake of which they are guilty; to charge them with others of which they are innocent; and to obstruct

their most laudable designs and exertions for the public welfare. On all these accounts, a good citizen will be wary and deliberate in his censures of public men or measures; he will neither forwardly listen to popular rumours or accusations, nor to the rhetoric of patriots out of place; but like an equitable and humane judge in our criminal courts, will rather act as counsel for the accused, than as a party against him.

2. That it is the part of a good citizen to give no entertainment to *imaginary* political evils, is a position, like many others both in morals and politics, as obvious in theory as it is often difficult to realize in practice. This difficulty is experienced whenever the general clashes with a particular interest; which must frequently happen in the course of human affairs. Thus when the trade of a country flows in new channels, those who suffer by the change, will be tempted to consider it as a political evil, though, on the whole, it should advance the common welfare; that is, though it should enable a

greater mass of the people to live comfortably with moderate labour. Or, suppose some heavy tax to be laid which goes to promote the same end, it will be in danger to be accounted impolitic and oppressive by those classes on which it chiefly bears. Or, lastly, when a nation is reduced in its territorial possessions, though the reduction should neither impair its resources nor its security, nay, though it should tend to consolidate the one and strengthen the other; yet a relic of national vanity might tempt a zealous patriot to lament it as a national misfortune. From these, and various other cases that might be supposed, it is evident, that some effort is required to discharge the mind of its partialities; and that it is necessary, in such circumstances, to be a good man in order to be a good citizen.

3. In the last place, As the common evils of humanity mingle themselves with all others, we should learn to bear them with patience, lest the resentments which they excite should, from the principle of association and the communicative nature of the passions, extend themselves to those

evils with which they are combined; and thus, because of our infelicity as men, we should become disaffected as citizens. To prevent this unhappy consequence, we should study to obtain a just acquaintance with our common condition in this world; and to do this effectually, besides a critical examination of ourselves, and of the present state of mankind, we should take a retrospective view of past ages. Thus, after we have looked back upon what has been done during a period of several thousand years, (a sufficient time surely for experiment) after we have looked around us, and considered how much evil, moral and physical, still remains in the world, notwithstanding all the attempts of philosophers and divines, moralists and legislators, for prevention and remedy; we shall be able, from the whole, to form a judgment of what is practicable, and be taught a lesson of great moderation in our designs and expectations; we shall be taught to place no great confidence of redress in any schemes of human wisdom and policy, nor be surprized if we are called to share in the

general calamity; we shall see that all which is possible to be done, is to mitigate those evils which cannot be cured, and to alleviate those burdens which cannot be removed.

SECTION III.

On the third Rule to be observed by a good Citizen, namely, *To avoid an idle Curiosity in political Matters; and still more a Disposition to hunt after small or unknown Grievances.*

I. CURIOSITY is an original passion in our nature. It discovers itself early in children, who, when any thing appears to be concealed from them, show themselves very anxious to detect the secret; or when any singular event engages their attention, are apt to be inquisitive after its cause.

This, like every other principle implanted by the Author of nature, neither can nor ought to be eradicated; our only business is to direct it to its proper objects, and to regulate the manner and measure of its exercise.

The objects to which it ought to be directed, relate either to our *natural,* our *mo-*

ral, or our *political* situation; and though the last only falls strictly within our subject, I would entreat the reader's indulgence to a few previous observations on the two former.

1. First then, as to our *natural situation.* When a man travels into a foreign land, his eye is directed to the face of the country; and should any new and singular phenomena present themselves, they naturally awaken his curiosity, and call forth his researches. Something like this is the case when, after the dawn of reason, we enter upon the great scene of the universe. Suppose a boy, who has begun to exert his understanding, should observe the sun rising behind a certain hill; and some months afterward should observe him rise behind another hill at some distance from the former; he will be curious to know the reason of this difference. Or, if he see the moon at first scarcely visible as a crescent, then in a semicircular form, and afterwards at the full, he will be equally curious to understand the cause of this changeable appearance; and this is a disposition which ought to be

encouraged, and, as far as possible, to be gratified. As his reason advances, and he is able to take a more extensive view of nature, he may be prompted, by the same inquisitive temper, to carry his researches into the vegetable, the animal, or the mineral kingdoms; he may endeavour to analyse the air, and, ascending above the atmosphere, to determine the laws of the planetary revolutions, and to explore the starry regions. And provided this excursive curiosity be regulated by those just rules of philosophy laid down by Bacon, and above all, by a regard to the divine will, which ought undoubtedly to direct and limit all our pursuits, it is both rational and laudable; it may subserve many useful purposes of life, and manifest the glory of the Creator, whose works are great and admirable, and "*sought out* * of all them that have pleasure therein †."

2. Our *moral* situation is an object of still more important and rational curiosity. To know the things around us in their natural

* דרושים quæsita. † Psal. cxi. 2.

virtues and properties, may indeed contribute to our present use and convenience; but to know them morally, or as they infer certain duties and obligations on our part, is a point of far greater concernment; as it bears an immediate respect to our real and final happiness. This ought therefore to call forth our most diligent and critical investigation; which, in order to be successful, must first proceed in an ascending scale from the creature to the Creator, whose will, informed by his wisdom, is *that* which renders binding and obligatory upon us, what before at most could only be discerned to be fit and congruous. In this way may some knowledge be obtained of the obligations we are under both towards God and man. But as nature alone fails to give us any full or clear information even of our duty; and fails still more to afford us any solid ground on which to build our future hopes and expectations; we must be content, after all our philosophic efforts, to have recourse to the page of revelation; we must *search the scriptures**,

* John v. 39. "Ερευνᾶτε τὰς γραφὰς.—In voce ἐρευνᾶν

examine, trace, and narrowly investigate these divine records, since in them we have *eternal life.* Here all our curiosity should be awakened, and here it is most apt to slumber *; for however men may be stimulated to seek after God in his works of nature and providence, the number is comparatively few of those who humbly and obediently seek him in his word; though it is by this only that he has manifested himself in a manner proportioned to our weakness, and consolatory to our fears and our necessities.

3. We proceed now to consider how far our political situation is an object of legitimate inquiry and laudable curiosity; after which, the way will be open for a few remarks on that idle humour noted in the title of this section, and which it is the

quidam statuunt metaphoram à canum sagacitate sumptam, ut significet *sagaciter aliquid inquirere*, atque é latebris eruere; sed præstat à metallis metaphoram ductam dicere." LEIGH'S *Crit. Sacra.*

* "Non libet rectiùs suspicari, non libet propiùs experiri; hìc tantùm curiositas humana torpescit." TERTUL. Apol. cap. 1.

part of every good citizen carefully to avoid.

(1.) An inquiry into our political situation is both allowable and necessary, inasmuch as a considerable part of our conduct ought to be regulated by the law of the land in which our lot is cast. It is this law which constitutes many of the duties that we owe to our country, to our prince, and to our fellow-citizens; and, consequently, without a degree of attention paid to it, we must be in continual danger of violating those constituted duties, notwithstanding our real inclination to discharge them. Hence arises the obligation we are under to acquaint ourselves with the political, as well as with the moral and natural, circumstances in which we are placed.

(2.) In the next place, This inquiry, besides being enforced by duty, is a matter of laudable curiosity. Every product of human ingenuity, if at all useful, is something to be examined and admired; the structure of a building, furnished with all suitable offices and apartments for the accommodation of a numerous houshold; or the frame of one

of those floating edifices, which are equally fitted to brave the elements, to repel a hostile attack, and to convey our merchandize to the remotest regions, is a production of this nature. How much more then must the fabric of a state, if accommodated to the wants, the conveniences, and the protection of every order of its citizens, be an object of curious inquisition, and rational admiration!

(3.) Further: As there never probably existed a political constitution which was more justly an object of such regard, than that of our own country, it must be contemplated with peculiar interest by every true Briton, both in its origin and through every stage of its progress. He will be delighted to discover its gradual dawn among our British and Saxon ancestors, till it broke forth with a degree of lustre under the auspices of the justly-renowned Alfred; many of whose institutions remain with little variation to this day; and having regretted for a moment its interruption by the Danes, he will gratulate its return with increased brightness, in the reigns of Edgar and of Edward

the Confessor. Again: After suffering almost a total eclipse by the Norman conquest, he will welcome its re-appearance under Henry the First, its rapid advance in the reign of John, by the grant of *magna charta,* and its arrival almost to the point of juridical perfection under our English Justinian, the first Edward. After a long interval of foreign and civil wars, he will note, in the great event of the reformation, one of the chief causes of its subsequent progress, notwithstanding the tyrannic stretches of power by Henry the Eighth, and some of his successors. Under the house of Stuart, amidst all the violent contentions between royal prerogative and the privileges of the people, he will admire the same steady progression of our political system, till he is brought to that happy period, when all those intolerable grievances introduced by the Normans were removed, military tenures abolished, property secured, personal liberty established, and especially that liberty which is to be prized beyond every other, liberty of conscience; and the whole clearly acknowledged and solemnly confirmed by the

unanimous and voluntary act of prince and people, at the era of the revolution. All this to a patriot citizen must be almost consecrated ground, which he will pass over with a kind of enthusiastic rapture; and after he has contemplated our invaluable constitution in its rise and progress to its present high degree of improvement, he will devoutly exclaim, like father Paul respecting the state of Venice, *Esto perpetua.*

(4.) Nor is political curiosity to be confined to a mere abstract research into the constitution and laws; it may also be laudably extended to the actual administration of public affairs. Peers of the realm, who may be considered as its natural and hereditary guardians, are under particular obligation to watch over the conduct of those who are entrusted with the executive part of the government; lest by their negligence, their malversation, or their incapacity, the commonweal should receive any detriment. The same duty is evidently no less incumbent on the representatives of the people, who are chosen, not only to enact laws, but also to see to their execution; and to

restrain or correct the exorbitances of the other branches of the constitution. Nor is the private individual altogether exempted from this public vigilance, according to his rank and influence in the community; since every citizen, in proportion to his ability, is bound studiously to promote the good of his country.

The above remarks on a laudable political curiosity, may help us to detect its counterfeit, which is so very common in the world, and which it is the part of a good citizen carefully to avoid, both from a regard to himself and others; as it tends neither to the improvement of his own mind; to the regulation of his conduct; to the public good; nor even to his innocent amusement. These are the negative characters that, when in conjunction, though not separately, mark the unprofitable and often dangerous quality which is here meant to be reprobated. We shall just touch upon them in the order now stated.

1. That much of what passes in the world under the name of *politics* has no tendency to promote intellectual improve-

ment, is too obvious to need any formal proof. It is a fact of which every man must be conscious by his experience; and the reason is not difficult to be assigned. In a general view, indeed, or so far as it respects the law of nature, or municipal law as grounded upon it, politics is doubtless a study which, beyond most others, is suited both to invigorate and enlarge the human faculties, and prepare them for the noblest exercise. But in this view it is not often an object of curiosity or attention. It is rarely extended, as we all know, beyond the actual administration of affairs, which cannot be supposed to yield much light or assistance towards the improvement now in question. What accession of wisdom is to be expected by prying into the cabinet, by discovering that such an expedition is on the *tapis*, that such a negotiation is in design or in train, or that such financial or commercial plans are in agitation? Which, with a thousand similar projects, of whatever use they may be in other respects, can certainly supply but very slender food to a man's understanding. And if

this be the case of great public measures, we cannot expect much more light and improvement from a curious investigation of state factions, court intrigues, or party contentions.

2. Nor does a spirit of ordinary politics, at least in one whose lot is cast among the lower orders of society, contribute more to regulate the conduct than to improve the understanding. To pursue a general acquaintance with our foreign relations, or with the state of parties at home, can supply a common tradesman or mechanic with few rules that may direct him how to behave himself in his family, in his shop, in the market, to his friends, or to his enemies. And if it contribute little to the knowledge of his ordinary duties, it contributes still less to their performance. While he is studying the pamphlet of the day, or sauntering in the coffee-house; while he is canvassing, correcting, or applauding the measures of administration, or of their opponents; or settling the balance of Europe; his family is in disorder, his business is neglected, his circumstances become embar-

rassed, and, before he is aware, perhaps he is on the edge of bankruptcy. And although only some of these consequences, or none of them, should follow, still his attention is diverted from his proper concerns; he is led to overlook the duties of the station assigned him in the community, and, by his endeavours to become a patriot, or to be so accounted, he only shows or renders himself a bad citizen.

3. Again: A spirit of politics in the mass of a people, whose subsistence must depend on their daily business, is likely to contribute as little to the public benefit, as to their own. Persons in such circumstances, cannot be supposed to possess that disengagement and liberty of mind, or those just and comprehensive views, which are necessary to judge soundly of the true interest of a nation, or of the best methods to promote it. To do this, a liberal education, and a considerable freedom from professional duties, are evidently required; and these are advantages which properly belong to the nobility and gentry of a country. It is this superior order of citizens, who

from the independency of their situation, and their detachment from the subordinate occupations of society, may be supposed best qualified to determine and act wisely for the good of the whole; like the Athenian general Iphicrates, who was neither an archer or a targeteer, a trooper or a foot-soldier, but one who knew how to command, and make use of them all *. And without a like disengagement from particular professions, those especially which are accounted less liberal, there is small probability of being able, either to form plans of public utility, or properly to estimate them when formed by others.

4. The last character of the curiosity here meant to be censured is, that it fails to yield even an innocent amusement, which, from whatever source derived, ought to be treated neither with severity nor indiffer-

* "The General Iphicrates, when Callias, the son of Cabrias, asked him, What art thou? art thou an archer, or a targeteer, a trooper, or a foot-soldier? answered well, I am none of these, but one who commands them all." PLUTARCH's Morals.

ence. The world is full of care, and can afford no abatement of any harmless satisfaction; nor is it to be denied, that a man may entertain himself with a newspaper or a political pamphlet, without violating any law of religion or morality, or any duty of social or civil life. The evil only is, and which we fear is common, when such an amusement takes up too much time, dissipates, or unduly agitates the mind, generates ill-temper, or unfits a man for a better world.

That much time is employed upon political topics every one must be sensible. The spirit of the old Athenians, who spent their days in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some *new thing**, (καινότερον, the *newest*, or, as we should now say, the *latest* intelligence) still continues in full vigour. On every side we see multitudes,

> Whoe'er on wing with open throats
> Fly at debates, expresses, votes,
> Just in the manner swallows use,
> Catching their airy food of news:

* Acts. xvii. 21.

Which, to him who seriously considers the importance of time, and that on the use we make of it hangs all our future hopes and expectations, must afford matter of melancholy reflection; especially in respect of those who have but little time at their command, and who spend it in a manner so unprofitable both to themselves and to those around them. Such an amusement, if so it must be accounted, is one surely which is accompanied with no small degree of folly and criminality.

Again: It is a character of legitimate amusement, that it prepares, or, at least, that it does not disqualify a man for a return to his serious duties. It must, therefore, be something which is suited to collect and quiet, and not to scatter and dissipate the spirits. When by this rule we examine our vulgar *politics*, we find them not of a quality to stand the trial, as being singularly hostile to composure and recollection. While a common newsmonger is at his desk, or behind his counter; at the anvil, or in the field; his thoughts are rambling to the ends of the earth; he is watching the wind, and

looking out with solicitude for the next mail, that may bring him intelligence of the politics and projects agitated at *Paris*, or at *Petersburgh*, at *Vienna*, or at *Constantinople*; or of the event of some war or negotiation, perhaps in the East or West Indies: objects indeed which may laudably engage the attention of a statesman, as they relate to his office; or of others who enjoy much leisure, together with a degree of public influence; but to a man who takes them up merely for amusement, and to the neglect of his proper calling, they can, at best, only prove a source of idle dissipation and unprofitable anxiety.

Further: A third unhappy consequence of a meddling political curiosity is, that it *generates ill temper*. Those who are ever prying into the character and quality of public men and measures, easily contract a captious and quarrelsome spirit that can be satisfied with nothing; every man is incompetent or knavish, and every measure absurd or pernicious. This spirit usually springs out of vanity, presumption, or malignity, (passions rooted in our com-

mon nature) and sometimes from all of them in conjunction. From the first, since to criticise and censure others, those especially who are of rank or eminence in the state, seems to argue a superiority of parts and character, which is a distinction that, of all others, is most flattering to vanity. From the second, because, as nearly allied to vanity, it affects a like pre-eminence; and because too it is heady and violent, impatient of inquiry, apt to fasten upon single circumstances, and consequently prone to judge and condemn without a proper knowledge of the cause, and without that respect to persons and things to which they are entitled. And from the third, because it is of the very nature of malignity to be captious and hostile, to disparage whatever is excellent or eminent, and to aggravate every fault or imperfection. From the three, therefore, in conjunction, and operating within the sphere of vulgar politics, where they cannot fail to be powerfully exerted, and called forth into full activity, the contentious and dissocial spirit of which we are

here speaking, must proceed with increased vehemence.

Finally: The last and worst consequence of this spirit is its unhappy influence on a man's future interest. It devours that time which is necessary to secure it; it diverts that attention without which it can never be prosecuted with effect; and it goes to form that character which is utterly inconsistent with the felicity of a future state. Amidst the serenity of the heavenly regions, there can be no place for those unquiet tempers, those malevolent dispositions, or those turbulent passions, which so often deform our low political atmosphere. The censures of vanity, of presumption, or malignity, are for ever banished thence, with all those who indulge them; which, if no other consideration prevailed, should be sufficient to check a curiosity, that, besides its unfavourable aspect on his present comfort, so much endangers a man's final happiness.

There are only two things (as some have well observed) that are necessary for any

one to know, and these demand his most inquisitive and diligent search, namely, religion, and his own business; with this knowledge he may come to act both the part of a good man and of a good citizen; without it, he must certainly fail in one of them, and may perhaps fail in both.

II. On the second part of the rule now before us, namely, *Not to admit a disposition to hunt after small or unknown grievances,* the following general remark may be sufficient.

To live contentedly under the best government, it is necessary not to go curiously in search of mischief; like certain patriots belonging to a little German state, who some years ago, as I remember, beset the court with their clamours, and upon being asked what grievances they laboured under, made answer, "None that they knew of; but that as some such might exist, they came to search after them." Men that will thus go in quest of trouble, deserve to find it; and in a world such as this, they seldom need to go far without meeting with what

they seek. A prudent man will be otherwise minded; if he enjoy at present his liberty and property, he will not idly torment himself with imaginations of dangers he does not see, or of distresses that he does not feel; and will leave it to the public guardians to watch against evils that are too remote for his optics: and should they even come home to his sense and feeling, he will be careful not to aggravate them, or rashly to charge them upon those at the helm of affairs; remembering that it is the lot of human life to suffer under innumerable calamities, in spite of all human precaution or vigilance.

It is the misfortune of some men to reap no other fruit from their patriotism than their own fears and jealousies. The national credit is in danger, trade is declining, foreign nations are conspiring against us, or some dreadful plot is hatching at home against our rights and liberties; though they see every man going his own way, and acting as his interest or his pleasure dictates, and every market crowded with wares and customers. Should it be said, these are no

infallible signs of national prosperity,—at least it must be allowed that they are no infallible signs of approaching beggary and chains: and while any hopeful symptoms remain, a true patriot will augur well of his country.

SECTION IV.

A fourth Rule to be observed by a good Citizen, is, *To beware of any unnecessary or hasty Attachment, and still more of a blind Devotion to any Party whatever, either in Politics or Religion* *.

A CONSIDERABLE portion of every nation consists of those, who, from the necessity they are under to earn their bread by daily labour, have no leisure to attend to the general interests of the community; and, if they had, are without sufficient ability to understand, or influence to promote them. The only way in which it is possible for this numerous class of citizens to serve their country, is by a faithful and diligent appli-

* By a *party* is here meant, any body of men, the chief design of whose association is the public good; when this design is changed for some other of private interest or ambition, the party then becomes a faction.

cation to the duties of their peculiar calling. Another portion consists of those who voluntarily withdraw themselves from public affairs, either, as supposing there is no need of their interference; or from a love of retirement; or from a predominant pursuit of some particular object; or as reserving themselves for occasions of special service; and the propriety of their conduct depends on the justness of the views and principles by which they are severally determined. A third portion (which in this country I hope is not very numerous) is made up of the idle, the curious, the pragmatical, or the factious citizens; not unlike those whom we have endeavoured to describe in the last section.

The citizen to whom the present rule is directed, belongs to none of these classes. He is one who has leisure and influence; and who takes an honest as well as active interest in whatever relates to the general welfare. This is the citizen we wish to guard against the dangers stated in the title of this section; and whom we shall consider under the two following characters:

Either, first, as one whose superior talents and established reputation, enable him to co-operate occasionally with every party; and, when he sees fit, to act independently of them all. Or, secondly, as one who needs the regular aid and encouragement to be derived from an associated body, in order to bear him up in his public conduct, and to render his endeavours efficient.

I. There are in every age a few distinguished men, who, by the eminency of their virtues and talents, are formed to stand alone, and to act their own part with a noble spirit of independence; who, by the superiority of their views, are able to judge of all parties, and by their inflexible integrity and true patriotism, to unite with none of them further than the public good may require; and whose reputation is so well established, that, without suffering from any charge of weakness or duplicity, they can thus by turns co-operate with men of very different descriptions. They can vote to-day with the court, and to-morrow with the opposition; join with the *whigs* on one

occasion, and with the *tories* on another; and still retain their place in the favourable opinion of their country *.

For any man who is capable of sustaining such a character to enlist in a party, would certainly be degrading to himself, and might prove injurious to his country; which it is probable he could never serve so effectually, as when, by extending his care to all parties, he moderated the violence of one, softened the prejudices of another, excited and directed the efforts of a third,

* Perhaps, in our own times, no man has approached nearer to this character than that eminent and disinterested patriot, the late Sir George Savile, Bart. to whom the writer of these lines is indebted for the leisure he enjoys; and to whose public and private virtues he gladly embraces this opportunity of offering his small tribute.

The following anecdote may show in how high estimation this distinguished senator was held for his political integrity.—When the Marquis of Rockingham was placed at the head of administration; upon being congratulated on the support he might expect from such a friend as Sir George in the house of commons, he replied, "Sir, I doubt not of his support so long as I continue to act for the good of my country; should I do otherwise, he would be the first man to impeach me."

allayed their mutual animosities, and caused a variety of jarring passions and interests to conspire to the good of the whole. Even at the head of a ruling party, he might be less able to promote the common welfare, than by his acting more at a distance in the mild and conciliating character of a general moderator.

II. To a citizen of the second description, (which comprehends a class much more numerous) who is disposed to take a part in public affairs, but is only qualified to act in concert with others; I would suggest a few obvious rules, which may be of use to direct him in his public conduct.

1. Let him be wary in his choice of a party. Let it be one which, among its other good properties, is disinterested in its views, modest in its professions, and temperate in its measures.

(1.) *Disinterested in its views;* that is, as much so as can be expected from such imperfect beings as men; from whom, if on the whole they prefer the general interest to their own, it is vain to look for more.

This is true of every man separately, and holds yet more strongly when they are united in a body, where the selfish passions act with less restraint, either from duty, fear, or shame. Should our well-meaning citizen mistake in this first point, instead of a party he would embrace a faction; and, under a notion of public good, might be made an instrument of mischief or of ruin to his country.

(2.) *Modest in its professions.* When a party holds out large and magnificent promises, it is commonly a sure proof, either of its weakness, or of its bad designs; either that it is the dupe of its own vain presumption, or means to practise on the credulous simplicity of the vulgar. Should it say, advance us into power, and every evil shall find a remedy, poverty and toil, misery and oppression shall soon vanish out of the land, every virtue and talent shall meet with their honourable reward, and every vice with its merited punishment; it might as well tell us, that our oaks shall distil with honey, and the rocks *pour out rivers of oil.* Or should it pretend to a purity of princi-

ple that admitted of no taint, that was incapable of any bias or perversion from private interests or affections; we must still be compelled to draw the same inference. Such promises and pretensions have been often employed to amuse and delude the populace in past times, and perhaps never more successfully or mischievously than in our own; which should put every good citizen upon his guard against them, and dispose him to listen or unite himself only to such modest and unassuming men, who invite his confidence more by their performances than their professions.

(3.) *Temperate in its measures.* As there are individuals in private life, so there are parties in the state, that are fair-spoken, yet violent in their conduct. Like *Simeon* and *Levi* in their carriage towards the *Shechemites*, they will speak peace, and meditate war *; or like a famous body of men in our own land, under the reign of the first Charles; they will respectfully use the king's name, in opposition to his person and

* Gen. ch. xxxiv.

government. Whether this last was a warrantable measure, or whether such extreme measures are in all cases to be condemned, is not here the question: certainly, in the first instance, they constitute a most legitimate prejudice against any party; and of such violent confederacies every prudent citizen will be disposed to say with good old *Jacob* respecting his two sons above-mentioned, *My soul come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.* A firm and enlightened moderation is an essential character of true patriotism: and it is around this standard that every man should rally, who wishes to conduct himself as a true friend to his country.

2. Another rule I would suggest is, *Not lightly to desert or to change a party after it has been once chosen.*

(1.) When a well-meaning man joins himself to any party in the state, it implies his favourable opinion of its tendency to promote the public good. Should he afterwards withdraw his support, it would seem

to imply that his opinion was changed, or, at least, that it was become less favourable. Again, should he proceed to engage himself in a different party, it would still further tend to throw disgrace on the former; and, without clear and satisfactory reasons for his conduct, there would be some ground to complain of his injustice towards his first associates, if not likewise of his injustice towards the public, by transferring his credit and assistance to those who might be less disposed or capable to advance the general welfare.

(2.) The consideration last suggested may deserve a more distinct notice. The world in general is very liberal in promise, but very sparing in performance. When an honest citizen contemplates some patriotic band at a distance, nothing can be more flattering to his wishes, as nothing can appear more favourable to the welfare of his country. Purity of principle, disinterested views, unanimous counsels, are the prominent features which attract his attention, and command his reverence; he hastens to

list himself under such a standard; but then the scene is changed. Instead of the immaculate and compacted body of patriotism which he had imagined, he finds corruption of principle, interested views, and divided counsels; or if there be one point in which the whole confederacy is agreed, it is, to turn out the present administration, and to occupy their places. Disgusted and repelled by the discovery, he betakes himself to a second or a third party, where he still finds the same selfish and jarring principles at work, and perhaps with increased depravity. All this should warn him against a shifting humour, and dispose him to abide by the party in which he is already engaged; at least not to change it for another, without very strong grounds to believe that he shall change for the better.

(3.) Again: A frequent change of party is too much for an ordinary citizen to support; it must destroy his credit with every party, and also with the public at large. It is only, as we have observed, for a few eminent men, whose dignity and

influence is from themselves, to sustain such a conduct. Such men indeed can never properly be ranked with any party, though they may lend themselves occasionally to all; they shed a lustre on others which they receive from none, and, whether separate or associated, shine the same in their own brightness. This honourable distinction the common patriot should not seek to emulate; he must shine with a borrowed light; alone and insulated he shines no more. It ought therefore to be his business, as a public man, to choose well his party; to co-operate with it in the manner which he judges most conducive to the general benefit; and never to desert it upon rash or interested considerations. Thus will he act with a degree of credit to himself, and with most advantage to his country.

3. The third rule I would suggest is, *To guard against the spirit of a party.*

(1.) First let it be observed, that this precaution is necessary in all parties and communities, whether religious or civil. Each has its characteristic bent or temper by

which it is distinguished. In regard to religion, there is no church without some tendency;—in its government, either to laxity or intolerance;—in its ritual, to a negligent indecorum, or to a superstitious nicety;—in its devotion, to warmth and enthusiasm, or to coldness and indifference;—and in its doctrine, to high and overstrained notions, or to mere deism and natural religion. Among the regular orders of the Romish church, which are so many distinct communities, some are prone to fanaticism, others to a cruel superstitious discipline, and many to a lazy indulgence. In regard to politics, (which are more immediately our subject) a spirit of despotism lurks in a monarchy; of anarchy in a republic; of discord and petty tyranny in an aristocracy. Under a mixed government, all these spirits are in conflict, and prevail by turns. Nay, there is no association in trade or manufactures, in arts or science, no guild or corporation without this *esprit de corps*, which is sure to operate upon every member, according to his individual character, and particular circumstances.

(2.) Another reason for guarding against the spirit of which we are speaking, is, that its influence is no less powerful than it is extensive. Man is very much the product of his situation in whatever capacity we view him, civil, religious, or literary. The instances are extremely few of those who rise above the genius of their age or country; or even above that of the particular body or society, with which they regularly act or associate. Notwithstanding any smaller individual differences, the family likeness remains. The monk retains the spirit of his order, and the liveryman of the common-hall; not only the lawyer, the physician, and divine, but also men of ordinary callings, receive a certain turn and character from their several professions. We can therefore have no cause to wonder if the same law extend itself over the political world; if the courtier and the patriot are much the same in all ages; and if the spirit of every state-party, like some mighty vortex, bears along with it almost all those who are placed within the sphere of its influence.

(3.) Hence may appear of how much importance it is, for a public man to guard against the spirit of the party to which he belongs; since otherwise he may be surprized into measures which he never meant to countenance. Under a notion of strengthening the hands of government, and maintaining social order, he may be led to injure the sacred cause of liberty; and, under the fair pretext of supporting the rights of men, and the privileges of citizens, he may abridge the necessary power of government, and open a door to general licence and anarchy. Let him, therefore, well study the genius of the party in which he is engaged, and how he may best guard against its irregularities. Should it be of a high prerogative or a high church complexion; let him endeavour to correct it by the sober doctrine of the rights and privileges of the people. Should it, on the other hand, have a tendency towards a democratic, a republican, and schismatical extravagance; let him try to moderate it, by insisting on the necessity of a prompt and uniform submission to the authority of the magistrate, and

on the importance of preserving a general decorum in our religious as well as civil concerns, in order to the maintenance of the public peace, and the advancement of the commonweal. Thus, in conjunction with any body of men who mean, on the whole, to promote the general welfare, he may acquit himself as becomes a good citizen, by a seasonable support or counteraction of its measures, and by his endeavours to correct its spirit by that of the constitution, and laws, and religion of his country.

4. The last rule I would suggest under this head is, *To act liberally towards other parties.*

(1.) *Not to impute ill designs to a party, merely on account of its dissimilarity or opposition to our own.* There is nothing more common than this among all parties, though nothing can be more illiberal, than to criminate others for no better reason than because they pursue not the same objects, or in the same way, with ourselves; as if the various position in which things are viewed by different persons, was not perfectly suf-

ficient to account for their difference of opinion and conduct respecting them, without any harsh imputation either upon their understanding, or their sincerity. Nay, though the declarations and conduct of a party should be extremely dubious and exceptionable, and bear a very threatening aspect upon the state; this alone would not afford any infallible indication of bad designs. Of this I shall adduce two memorable examples from our own history. During the period between the restoration of Charles the Second and the revolution, the church of England was so lavish in her professions of *passive obedience* and *non-resistance*, as if she meant to sacrifice the national liberty to an ostentatious loyalty, and to her resentments against the puritans: yet, at the eve of the latter great event, when the misguided James the Second laid claim to a power of dispensing with the laws of the land, in order to let in upon it a deluge of popish superstition, the same church, in a noble contradiction to the slavish doctrines she had before so disgracefully maintained, was the first to erect a standard against him.

The second example fell under the reign of the unhappy father of the above princes, when the puritanic party engaged in a civil war, which, through the prevalence of a fanatical faction that sprang up among them, at length terminated in the destruction both of the king and the monarchy; quite contrary to the design of the first actors, as evidently appears from their conduct at the time, and from the principal part they sustained in the restoration of the monarchy, by the recal of Charles the Second. Now had the puritans, in the former instance, charged the church party as votaries of arbitrary power; or, in the other, had the church charged the puritans as determined republicans and sworn enemies to monarchy, the event would, in either case, have shown the accusation to have been groundless. Both of them alike displayed, in the hour of trial, their firm attachment to the same glorious cause; which may teach a lesson of mutual candour and moderation to their successors at the present important period; and induce them to unite in every regular and constitutional effort,

to secure and perpetuate, to the latest posterity, the laws, and liberties, and religion of their country.

(2.) *It is not enough to forbear any false imputations upon a contrary party, without a readiness to bestow that just praise which belongs to it, or to any of its distinguished individuals.* There is scarce any party without some laudable property; and this property a good citizen will cheerfully recognize, though it should be found on the side opposite to his own. It is laudable to guard against democratic licence and disorder; and this precaution he will readily commend, though he should be one of a popular party; and not severely condemn, though it should be extended beyond what the occasion might require. It is also laudable to watch against the tyranny of rulers; and this jealousy he will also mark with his approbation, and not rigorously censure, though it should be carried to some excess. Further, Whenever more than ordinary virtues and talents display themselves in an opposite party, (and he must be very partial to his own side not to suppose that this may often be

the case) he will be among the foremost to acknowledge them; to drop a tear over a *Falkland*, or to pay all due honour to the invincible love of liberty, and to the other eminent parts and accomplishments of a *Hampden*.

(3.) Lastly: *It is the property of a good citizen to allay animosities, and to promote an amicable intercourse, among different parties.* To unite them all in one body, would seldom be practicable; and, if practicable, would not perhaps be desirable in the present state of human nature. Brought into such near approach, their repulsive powers would act with redoubled force, and probably cast them at a still greater distance from each other than they were before. All, therefore, that can reasonably be proposed is, to guard them against a perverse opposition in points wherein they differ, and dispose them to mutual assistance in those wherein they are agreed; that so, instead of indulging a spirit of hostility, they might afford ready succour to each other in distress, and cordially co-operate against the common enemy. Thus, by

by their combined efforts, court and country, churchmen and dissenters, might more effectually promote the common cause of order, liberty, and true religion; and oppose a more powerful barrier against the inroads of sedition and tyranny, of fanaticism and superstition.

SECTION V.

The last general Rule we propose as proper to be observed by a good Citizen is, *Never forwardly to urge his public Claims or Pretensions, nor beyond what the common Good may require; and when this, on the Whole, is provided for, to rest satisfied in the quiet and faithful Discharge of the Duties of his present Station.*

As it is one character of a good man to endeavour to merit praise, but not to challenge it; so it is of a good citizen, to exert himself for the benefit of his country, but not forwardly to demand his reward in a participation of public honours or offices; which indeed, if offered, he will receive with gratitude, or decline with modesty; if withheld, though it may cost him a momentary displeasure, he will give place to no unmanly complaints or secret resentments. He will still cherish in himself a

disposition to repeat his efforts for the public good, and to seek his recompense in the consciousness of well-doing.

He, therefore, is no good citizen, or he is one of the lower order, who is eager to urge his claims to public favour or reward. For however his claims may be just, and such as he ought not entirely to forego, still it becomes him to prefer them with modesty, in due time and place, without any exaggeration of his merits, and as one who is sensible, that virtue, if at all it deserve the name, though it must ever need the allowance of heaven, is something beyond all human remuneration.

But without dwelling on this general view, let us descend to a few more particular reflections on the subject.

The public claims of a citizen must be grounded either on the constitution or laws of his country; on his own personal character; or on the natural rights of man. The first of these cases, as it scarcely falls within our present subject, we shall dismiss very briefly; on the two latter we shall detain the reader a moment longer.

1. Those public claims, which are grounded on the constitution and laws of the state, a citizen may seem most at liberty to prosecute. Should he possess some dormant title to nobility, he may laudably avail himself of his right, and assume his rank in the peerage, provided it be assumed from a pure motive, and with a reasonable prospect of extending his sphere of public service; otherwise, should he seek this elevation from an impulse of vanity, and with a probability of diminished usefulness, he would then act the part of a weak or of a bad member of the community. Again: should it be some public official situation to which a citizen is legally entitled, and in which he might usefully serve his country, while at the same time it afforded him the means of his own comfortable subsistence; every one must approve of his prosecuting a claim under circumstances so highly just and honourable. In these and many other cases which might be supposed, a good citizen may step forth and assert his political privileges, with the full countenance and approbation of his country, or at

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least without any danger of incurring its censure.

2. We have next to consider those claims, or rather pretensions, that are grounded on personal character; and particularly on a man's honest intentions and abilities to serve his country. Such pretensions a good and prudent citizen will not be eager to bring forward, and for the following, among other reasons.

(1.) Because whatever his honesty may be, he feels it is too imperfect and assailable to permit him to be proud or to make a boast of it; and however considerable may be his abilities, he is sensible they must often be found unequal to the intricacy and exigency of affairs. Besides, his character for parts and integrity is either already established, or it is not; if the former, he has no need eagerly to display it himself; and, if the latter, such ostentation, though it may take with the populace, will not help to recommend him to the countenance and esteem of the more discerning citizens, who are aware, that men of suspicious character are most apt to boast of their probity, and

that showy and superficial wits are the readiest to trumpet their extraordinary parts and abilities. This caution against an ostentatious humour was perhaps never more necessary than at present, when, among the numbers who step forward to proclaim their own merits, there are found some men of undoubted sense and understanding, and we may hope also of general integrity; who, if they fall short of the great Roman orator in genius, learning, and eloquence, may, at least, be allowed to surpass him in the faculty of which we are speaking, and in which too, he was so pre-eminent. Such authorities, however, should be so far from weighing with a sober citizen in favour of this vaunting disposition, which he must have observed to be generally followed with miscarriage and dishonour; that they should rather serve to confirm him more strongly in the salutary opinion, that modesty, as well as honesty, is, on the whole, the best policy.

(2.) Another reason against a forwardness to advance public pretensions founded on personal qualities, is the difficulty of ascer-

taining their value. Though a man's honesty and capacity may in general be acknowledged, the particular degree of these qualities, or whether they are such as may entitle him to some specific rank or office in the state, may be matter of various opinion. Hence it becomes a good citizen to be reserved and modest in his estimate of his own merits; and not hastily to suppose himself injured, though they should not be admitted to the extent at which he had rated them. Even though he should be appointed by his country to some station manifestly beneath his deserts, or to one less honourable than what he had before occupied, let him not sullenly refuse it on these accounts; nor imagine that by its acceptance he would suffer any degradation; but rather, in such a case, let him nobly think and say with the excellent Plutarch, who, after he had been preceptor to the emperor Trajan, and enjoyed the dignity of the consulate; upon being nominated scavenger to the city, replied to one who reproached him with the meanness of the office, "That

he thought nothing mean by which he could serve the republic *."

In cases of public competition, it may be no less difficult to ascertain the *comparative* merits of a particular candidate. That a man has twice the property of another, that he is of a more honourable descent, or that he has had the advantage of a more liberal education, may be capable of satisfactory proof; but that he has more honesty or more ability for public service, might be a point not so easily decided. A sober citizen will therefore be slow to advance a pretension of so disputable a nature; aware how much every man is partial in his own cause, he will be jealous of himself and liberal to others, especially to a competitor; to whose just praise he will pay his willing tribute, and whose failings, either he will not mark, or mark without aggravation. Now suppose a man, under the influence of these principles, and desirous to serve his country, to present himself a candidate

* Plut. *Political Precepts.*

for a seat in parliament; he will present himself with the consciousness of one who means well, yet not presuming upon his merits; neither lavish of professions in his own favour, nor disparaging to his opponents; and should his offers of service be ultimately rejected, he will retire in the spirit of the generous Spartan Pæderatus, who, upon being excluded from the noble band of heroes that was chosen to defend the pass at Thermopylæ, returned home exulting, that there were found in Sparta three hundred citizens more worthy than himself*.

3. Lastly, we have to consider those claims that are founded on the natural rights of man; or on that liberty with which every one is invested, when regarded only as an insulated individual, of doing whatever is not prohibited by some divine law.

(1.) As all government, in its essence, implies an abridgment of our natural rights,

* Plut. *Life of Lycurgus.*

or a relinquishment of some of them, in order to the security of the rest; whoever will claim them to their full extent, must exclude himself from a state of civil society; that is, he must abandon the liberty and security of a citizen, to roam at will as a savage amidst the wants and perils of a wilderness.

(2.) Hence every good citizen, especially if under a moderate government, will be cautious how he advances any claim or pretension, that goes beyond the present constitution and laws of his country; since (let me repeat again) every innovation is of dubious consequence; and when things on the whole are well, a wise man will wish to keep them so, without exposing them to fresh hazard. There is no topic more factious than that of our *natural rights;* it has overset a neighbouring country, and will overset any country where it is admitted without judgment or limitation. Nor is the matter improved by calling such rights absolutely and universally *imprescriptible* and *unalienable*; it is to call them what they are

not; since all government in its very essence implies (as we have just observed) a surrender or suspension of part of these rights, for the sake of securing the remainder; and such hyperbolical titles can serve to no other purpose than to heighten the inflammatory harangues of a seditious demagogue. Besides, every one will take care to insert in his code of rights any claim or pretension which he is strongly inclined to advance. Suppose the claim of universal suffrage has seized the imagination; this will quickly be converted into an unalienable right; and every government shall be treated as tyrannical where this pretended claim is not admitted. The case is alike with all other sweeping demands which tend, in their principle, to set aside every political test and qualification whatever; and to reduce society to an universal scramble, or to a scene of democratical and ruinous contention.

(3.) It must be allowed, indeed, that the natural rights of mankind may be more abridged, or left more at large, than is ne-

cessary or agreeable to the general interest of the community. In either case, the political system is imperfect; and it concerns every good citizen, in due time and place, and by every fair and honourable method, to endeavour to correct its errors and to supply its deficiencies; till it make some approach to that happy temperament which was celebrated under the emperor Nerva, when the authority of the prince was harmoniously combined with the liberty of the subject *." It is this conjunction which constitutes the true felicity of a state under a political consideration; and to attain it, in some prevailing degree, is all that can reasonably be proposed or expected. And this brings us to the second part of the rule which we have now briefly to illustrate; namely,

II. *That when the public welfare, on the whole, is provided for, it is the part of a*

* "Nerva Cæsar res olim dissociabiles miscuerit, principatum ac libertatem." TAC. Agr. vita. sect. iii.

good citizen to rest satisfied in the quiet and faithful discharge of the duties of his present station.

From what has already been advanced it may appear, that while a government continues to maintain the order and promote the general happiness of society, it deserves to be supported, whatever be its form and administration; that if indeed it can be improved or exchanged for a better, in a peaceable way, it ought to be done; but that studiously to vex and harass, and still more, any attempt to subvert such a government by force, ought severely to be condemned; war being an evil which nothing can justify but the most urgent necessity; and this, in the present supposition, has no place. A good citizen will therefore submit to many smaller grievances without murmur or complaint; and should others arise of a more grave and serious nature, he will use all gentle and regular means of redress; and before he entertains a thought of appealing to the sword, he will carry the principle of *non-resistance* to the last extremity; he will submit to many stretches of prerogative,

to many partial and inexpedient laws, to many abuses of power in inferior magistrates; he will submit, till government is degenerated to such a degree as no longer to answer the end of its institution; *the common good.*—While this on the whole is promoted, he will be ready to do full justice to the virtues and abilities of those in power, and to extenuate their faults and their imperfections. He will consider, as it is elegantly expressed in Tacitus, that "we ought to bear with the luxury and avarice of rulers, as we endure barren years, storms, and other disorders of nature; that there will be vices while there are men, yet not without some intermission; and that they are compensated by greater benefits *."

Viewing thus equitably the state of public affairs, a wise and good citizen will be modest in his demands upon his superiors; and not

* "Quomodo sterilitatem, aut nimios imbres, aut cetera naturæ mala; ita luxum aut avaritiam dominantium tolerate. Vitia erunt donec homines; sed neque hæc continua; et meliorum interventu pensantur." TAC. Hist. lib. iv. cap. 74.

pettishly quarrel with his station in the community, though it may happen to be less privileged than that of some others.

Should he be obliged to earn his bread by daily labour, he will consider, that the very existence of society requires a large proportion of its members to remain subjected to this necessity; and supposing him in a land of freedom, though the fruit of his toil should be small, he will not forget that he enjoys it in security; equal in this respect to the proudest of his fellow-citizens, and superior to the highest subject of a despotic government. Again, instead of looking with envy on those above him, he will endeavour to reap the solid advantages of his humble condition, in health and content; blessings which he sees often paid down as the price of wealth and distinction.

Should he be raised a little higher in the order of society, and together with liberty and security, should enjoy a modest competence; he would see still further reason to be satisfied with his lot. Calmly looking round on human life, he would perceive

himself in one of her most eligible situations, notwithstanding a few civil disadvantages he might happen to lie under; which, if warranted by sound policy, he would approve; and, though unwisely imposed, he would bear with good humour; nay, would be inclined to consider them as a happy bar to his ambition or avarice, and a security to his present peace.

What then shall we think of him, who, exempt from every political inconvenience, and in possession of all the means of a virtuous and noble independence, is still dissatisfied with his condition, and ready to quarrel with the general state of affairs, because, alas! he is distinguished by no place at court, or not invested with some public office of honour or profit; or, perhaps, because he is not gratified with some title or trapping of nobility? Such as this, however, is the preposterous ambition we have sometimes to lament in the conduct of a country gentleman, who chooses rather to obtrude his services where they are neither required nor wanted, and waste his days and nights at the levees and in the

antechambers of men in power, than to reside with the dignity of a prince upon his paternal inheritance! To descend from this elevation to a state of low dependance, to sigh after places or pensions, ribbands or titles, and, if he cannot obtain them, to set himself in opposition to the laws or government of his country, is the part of a man lost to nature and true honour, and prepared to sell his birthright, like Esau, for a mess of pottage.

Were it possible to work upon such depravity, we might oppose the example of a great statesman *, who tells us, in his *Essay upon Gardening*, that as a country life was the inclination of his youth, so it was the pleasure of his age; and that of the many great employments which had fallen to his share, he had never asked or sought for any; but had often endeavoured to escape from them all, into the ease and freedom of a private scene.

Again: Should there be found a class of men in a country who stand excluded from

* Sir W. Temple.

its public honours and emoluments, merely for what they deem a purer faith or worship; however impolitic or illiberal such an exclusion might be, it would lie upon them in a peculiar manner to be studious of a just deference and submission *to the powers that are;* to show that good christians are of all men least disposed to clog the measures of government, only because they are not admitted to share its favours; that provided they can enjoy liberty of conscience, with a reasonable security for their persons and property, they will not eagerly contend for other advantages; and that when, upon some pressing exigency, they step forth on the public stage, it is at the clear call of duty and of their country, and not from any low inducements of honour or profit.

There are few things to be met with more odious, than a busy meddler in politics pretending to religion; nor is the difference much, whether he list himself under the banner of Whig or Tory. Above all, this is odious in a teacher of christianity; especially if he suffer it to appear in his public

ministrations. To make the pulpit an engine of court flattery, or a *drum ecclesiastic* to beat up for patriotic recruits, is a conduct deserving the severest reprehension. A true minister of the Prince of Peace, whose kingdom is not of this world, directs his attention to higher objects, and shuns the strifes and entanglements of secular affairs.

It is an old charge against those who have made a profession of true religion, that they were *movers of sedition, hurtful to kings and provinces, paying neither toll, tribute, nor custom;* and this charge, it must be acknowledged, has not always been groundless. The Jews are known to have been a seditious people, and sometimes to have proceeded to actual rebellion; nor have there been wanting men bearing the christian name, who have followed their example; men, as described by an apostle, *presumptuous, self-willed, and not afraid to speak evil of dignities;* who have said, *with our tongues will we prevail, who is lord over us?* Nay, such monsters have sprung up

in the christian church, who, instead of yielding due obedience to the existing powers, have attempted to seize the government into their own hands, from a fanatical conceit, *that dominion is founded in grace:* as if the design of the gospel was to dissolve all our civil obligations, to reverse the order and state of the world, *to set servants on horses, and bring down princes to walk like servants upon the earth.* The primitive christians knew nothing of this frenzy; and their passive conduct under the most barbarous tyrants, is a standing reproach to such modern christians, who, if every thing does not come up to their mind, and tally with their *code of rights,* can think of nothing less than *binding their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron.*

Let me then press upon the reader, if he be one (as I hope he is) who is jealous for the honour of the christian name; to manifest to the world in his temper and conduct, that christianity, so far from superseding the duties arising from our natu-

ral or civil relations, binds them more strongly upon us, and in forming good men, forms good subjects; that by enforcing a supreme regard to God, it most effectually promotes a quiet and cheerful submission to *the ordinances of men;* and that it is only by a prudent and peaceable deportment, that good christians are ambitious to vindicate their profession, and to put to silence the calumnies of their enemies.

CHRISTIAN POLITICS.

PART IV.

ON THE WAY TO LIVE HAPPILY UNDER ALL GOVERNMENTS, AND IN ALL SITUATIONS.

SECTION I.

The Foundation of the Happiness here proposed, must be laid in Peace of Conscience, and in holy and well-regulated Affections.

EVERY plan of happiness that depends on external circumstances, is neither practicable in its nature, nor, if practicable, would be of long duration. Let us suppose (as some have supposed) that a perfect system of legislation and government was sufficient to render every individual of

a nation happy; yet where shall we find such a system? and, if found, how shall we secure its continuance? A single tyrannic prince, or seditious chief, would be enough to derange the whole fabric, and lay it prostrate in the dust.

We must therefore, in our search after happiness, learn to extend our view beyond all the contrivances of human wisdom, and the efforts of human power; and, if with seriousness and humility we thus prosecute the inquiry, it will not ultimately be in vain. For since next to the glory of God, happiness is the great end of human existence; and since so many notices of divine philanthropy, confirmed and ratified by express declarations of scripture, appear through all the works of creation and providence; we have reason to believe, notwithstanding the apostasy of our nature, that no man's condition, without his own great default, ever becomes so utterly hopeless and wretched, but that some path lies from it, which, if pursued with persevering diligence, will bring him at last out of darkness and misery into a state of light and comfort.

The chief sources of man's infelicity are to be found in his guilty conscience, and his disordered passions; and till some effectual remedy be applied to these evils, he cannot long be at rest under any government or in any situation.

I. A sense of guilt naturally produces fear; fear of divine displeasure, and of its awful consequences beyond this life. It is to relieve themselves from this anxiety that men turn towards every quarter, and apply to every resource; to the engagements of business, or the dissipations of pleasure; to philosophic speculations, or to some species of religion or of superstition.

1. To assert that men often have recourse to business as a relief to that inward disquiet which arises from an unpacified conscience, is to assert what charity must be pained to admit, but what I fear is unquestionable fact. When Cain *went out from the presence of the Lord,* we are told that he dwelt *in the land of Nod, eastward of Eden*;*

* Gen. iv. 16.

or, as it might be rendered, *he was a wanderer in the land eastward of Eden.* The next news we hear of him is, that *he built a city;* which some suppose to have been with intent to divert his attention from settling on himself, in his present reduced state of guilt and fearful apprehension. Whether this interpretation be just or not, it is certain that much of the building and planting, and other busy occupations that are going forward in the world, can be ascribed to no higher or better origin. It must be granted, indeed, that a natural love of employment, together with that love of variety which arises less from guilt than from imperfection, constitute two powerful springs that set the world in motion. But after this deduction is made, there still remains a considerable portion of human activity that must be resolved into the cause of which we are speaking; and whose chief object it is to divert the mind from painful reflections on its own moral situation.

2. That pleasure is pursued for the same end, and with still greater vehemence and

expectation, must be obvious to all. Theatres and masquerades, with other spectacles and mummeries of which the wits of men are so strangely inventive, whatever positive gratification they may be supposed to afford, are doubtless, at times, resorted to merely as so many diversions of uneasy thought; or as charms and opiates to suspend or lay asleep the secret reproaches of a guilty mind, and its fearful bodings of what may come hereafter. The inefficacy of these, or similar devices, to answer such purposes, we find strongly pictured in the stories of Damocles and of Belshazzar; of whom the former, (it is said) at the court of Dionysius, when provided with every thing that was suited to regale the sense, or enchant the imagination, could find no relish for his entertainment, on account of a pointed dagger which he observed suspended over his head*; and the latter, we know, amidst a magnificent banquet, and before a thousand of his lords, shook with con-

* Cic. Tusc. Disp. lib. v. c. 21.

sternation at the sight of *a hand writing upon the wall**.

3. Nor is it uncommon, in this philosophic age, to meet with men who seek the same relief in their metaphysical or moral speculations; like those unhappy spirits described in *Paradise Lost*, who, apart from the vulgar crowd that endeavoured to divert their griefs by musical strains, and various feats of war and agility,

> "Sat on a hill, retired,
> In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
> Of providence, fore-knowledge, will, and fate;
> Fix'd fate, free-will, fore-knowledge absolute;
> And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.
> Of good and evil much they argu'd then,
> Of happiness and final misery,
> Passion and apathy, and glory and shame;
> Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy;
> Yet with a pleasing sorcery, could charm
> Pain for a while, or anguish, and excite
> Fallacious hope."

Of the metaphysician I shall take more particular notice in a subsequent section.

* Dan. v. 5.

Of the moralist, who imagines that virtue alone is a sure recommendation to divine favour, and consequently is a sufficient balm for a wounded conscience, I would briefly observe, that if in his idea of virtue he include piety, it will be granted him, that a man of virtue is entitled both to divine favour and to inward peace. But, after this concession, he must allow me to insist that no one, while he continues proudly to reject the aids held out to him by revelation, will become, in the sense here stated, a man of virtue. And if, in defiance of apostles and prophets, he should still presume to wrap himself in his own excellence and sufficiency, I must leave him, for the present, to the grave and monitory rebuke of a celebrated wit and patriot: "Whoever," says he, "to the prejudice of our Saviour's merit, and debasing the operation of the Holy Ghost, shall attribute too much to his own natural vigour and performances, will be in some danger of finding his virtue *perniciosa ad salutem**."

* See And. Marvel's Rehearsal transprosed. Part ii. p. 251.

4. It is a principal design of every species of religion, whether true or false, to hold out relief to a guilty conscience. All the penances and pilgrimages, the rites and sacrifices that have been practised in different countries and ages, have chiefly had this end in view; an end far beyond their virtue or efficacy to attain, and which, as scripture strongly warrants us to hold, could only be accomplished by the sacrifice of Christ. This is the great and only *consideration,* on account of which those who truly *repent and believe,* obtain pardon of sin, and are accepted to divine favour. For since our best virtues and graces are imperfect, and cannot stand the rigour of divine justice, they must need allowance and forgiveness; so that the best man in the world, in his best performances, must be *justified freely by grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;* in whom, as a propitiatory sacrifice, God appears conspicuously *just,* while he justifies the penitent believer.

Here then is a solid foundation laid for peace of conscience; *and other foundation can no man lay.* To depend on virtue without

pardon; or on pardon without respect to the atonement of Christ, and *before* a prevailing principle of piety and virtue is wrought in the soul, is vain and fallacious. For as the scripture declares, that, *without shedding of blood there is no remission,* so, in the order of bestowment, it instructs us to consider this blessing as *subsequent* to *repentance* and *conversion**; or to that interior change, whether produced in a longer or shorter time, or in whatever period of life, by which God is restored to his supremacy in the human heart.

II. Peace of conscience is a blessing intimately connected with holy and well-re-

* The following passages may be sufficient to justify the order here stated.—"Repent and be converted, *that your sins may be blotted out.*" Acts iii. 19.—"That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." Luke xxiv. 47.—"Him hath God exalted—to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts v. 31.—So in St. Paul's commission to the Gentiles: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, *that they might receive forgiveness of sins.*" Acts xxvi. 18.

gulated affections; and both together constitute a solid ground of happiness in all conditions and in all circumstances.

1. The connection betwixt peace of conscience and right affections will be evident, if we consider, that as nothing tends more to throw the mind into commotion than conscious guilt, nothing can more conduce to inward tranquillity than pardon and reconcilement. It is remarked by naturalists, that oil poured into a stormy sea calms its agitation *; which is analogous to the case before us; for nothing more powerfully tends to compose a stormy mind than an infusion of divine peace. This blessing is the purchase of our Redeemer, who is eminently styled *our peace* †; and to him we must look for it. In the mean time, it is indisputably our duty, by every method in our power, and by exerting that measure of divine help already afforded us, to check the disorder of our bosoms, and thus to in-

* This is remarked by *Plutarch* in his *Natural Questions.*

† Ephes. ii. 14.

vite that more potent aid, and that reconciling and pardoning mercy, which can effectually compose every irregular motion of the passions, and reduce the tempest into a calm.

2. That there is no happiness without well-regulated affections seems to be the unanimous voice both of religion and philosophy. Even *Epicurus*, who placed the chief good of man in pleasure, yet resolved this pleasure chiefly into mental tranquillity. And this combined suffrage of reason and religion stands confirmed by universal experience. Every man must be sensible, that true enjoyment can never consist with domineering pride or devouring envy, with profuse dissipation or insatiable avarice, or with any other of our malignant or sensual passions. A man must be in possession of himself, and at peace with his fellow-creatures, (at least he must not wantonly provoke their enmity or opposition) to enjoy any measure of true satisfaction. He must study to establish the just balance of his mind, and to cultivate those mild and benevolent dispositions, which, if they will not always con-

ciliate the kindness of others, can seldom fail to abate and soften their resentments.

A man who is thus at peace with God and with himself, and who thus seeks peace with his neighbour, can never justly be deemed unhappy. He may expect to come under the blessing of the *meek*, to whom it is promised, that they shall *inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace* *. And though, in the present mixed state, it should be otherwise; though he should meet with his full share of suffering from the political, and the other innumerable evils that overspread the world, he will not be left unprovided with a variety of topics which may afford him support and consolation amidst them all.

Amongst these, as the doctrine of a superintending Providence chiefly deserves attention, I shall endeavour, in the following section, to state briefly what has occurred to me in reflecting upon this important subject.

* Psalm xxxvii. 11.

SECTION II.

The Doctrine of Providence a chief Topic of Comfort to good Men.

THE providence of God comprehends all creatures, with all their operations, and every circumstance attending them; nothing is too vast or too minute for its notice or control.

All the events that happen throughout the universe may be ascribed to divine appointment, except the voluntary determinations of free agents *.

Therefore all events, such free volitions excepted, must bear some direct impression of God, of his wisdom or power, of his goodness or justice; in a word, of his in-

* By a *voluntary determination*, I understand such a one as might have been forborne by the agent in the precise circumstances, internal and external, in which it was formed.

finite perfections. And it will make no difference as to our present argument, whether such events proceed immediately from the divine agency, or through the intervention of second causes; whether they are separate acts, or the consequences of general laws.

Of that energy by which effects are produced, and the course of things is continued, we know nothing. Of causation, whether original or secondary, we have no idea. How the world was made at the *fiat* of the Creator, how one body is put in motion at the impulse of another, or how the action of the mind is connected with the motion of a limb, we are entirely ignorant. It is sufficient to know that all effects either arise immediately from the power of God, without any medium or instrumentality, or according to those constitutions and laws which he has established.

Though our free volitions are exempt from every kind of necessity, moral as well as physical, they are nevertheless subject to the influence of our dispositions, our views, and external circumstances; all which

are under a divine superintending direction.

God, by restraining our evil inclinations and inspiring others, can easily change our determinations, without doing the least violence to our liberty. He tells Abimelech in a dream, *I withheld thee from sinning against me* *. And Laban says to Jacob, *It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt, but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob from good to bad* †: and it would appear from all the circumstances of the story, that the heart of Esau was under special influence, when he received his brother Jacob with so much kindness and generosity‡.

And as God can rule the will by a direct act, or by impressing the passions; he can do the same through the medium of the understanding. There is something unaccountable in those trains of ideas that pass through our minds; some of them we know

* Gen. xx. 6. † Gen. xxxi. 29.
‡ Compare Gen. xxvii. 41.—xxxii. 11.—xxxiii. 4-9.

may be resolved into the principle of association; yet how often are there trains that appear to us perfectly new, and which had no previous tracks in the imagination that we can discover; and how often too are known trains broken and interrupted by the incursion of ideas of which the memory has no recollection? All this is wonderful to us, yet certainly is not without his superintendance, who at once regulates the course of every particle of matter, and every motion in the intellectual world.

The thoughts of a young man, in deliberating upon a plan of life, may first run in a commercial line; this may be crossed by some other that shall turn his attention towards law, physic, or divinity; or some new track may present itself, that shall divert him into a project which never occurred to him before. And thus ideal trains, over which he has very little control, may conduct him to very different determinations respecting his future calling or employment in the world.

Take another illustration. When Cæsar, upon his breach with Pompey, had reached

the Rubicon, he is said to have made a halt at the bank of this river, and seriously to have debated with himself the business before him; his mind inclining now one way, and then another, as the danger of the enterprize, the calamities it might draw after it, the perverseness of his enemies, and the glory of victory, offered themselves by turns to his view. In this state of suspense, a single idea more or less might have produced a different resolution, and the world have taken another course. "At last," says Plutarch, "borne on by an extraordinary impulse, he would reason no longer, but, committing himself to his fortune, plunged into the Rubicon, crying, *The die is cast.*" Who must not acknowledge, that the heart of Cæsar on this critical occasion, was *in the hand of God as the rivers of water* *.

After a man has formed his resolution, the execution of it may depend upon a thousand circumstances beyond his prudence or management. The winds or the waves, or other contingencies of nature,

* Prov. xxi. 1.

which he can neither foresee nor control; or the dishonesty, the humour, or negligence of other men who are necessary to his purpose, may either suddenly dash, or gradually obstruct and defeat, his best-concerted projects. The weakness or treachery of a single individual, or one untoward incident, may baffle his ablest efforts, and teach him his dependance upon that Providence which has all nature at command, and which only can order the unruly wills and affections of men.

There is a beautiful instance in the story of Esther of this divine superintendance, in furnishing views and disposing circumstances, for the accomplishment of a great national deliverance. Haman, having conceived a violent resentment against Mordecai the Jew, to satiate his vengeance procured an edict for the destruction of all the Jews who were scattered through the Persian empire. On the very night when Haman meant to solicit an order for the execution of Mordecai, the king, to amuse his thoughts, (not being disposed to sleep) called for the public records; and that part being accidentally

read to him which recited his deliverance, by means of Mordecai, from a dangerous conspiracy, he inquired, what reward had been conferred on his deliverer for this service; at which critical moment, Haman appeared in the outer court, to speak to the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for the purpose. Upon his admittance, being asked, What shall be done to the man whom the king delighted to honour? and having answered according to his own ambitious wishes, he was commissioned to do all that honour to Mordecai which he imagined would have been done to himself; and when he had discharged this mortifying office, was hanged upon the gallows he had prepared for his adversary. The sanguinary edict he had obtained against the Jews at large, was counteracted by another; and in every province, this devoted nation had *joy and gladness,* and many of the people of the land became Jews, *for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.* That such an extraordinary coincidence of circumstances, as we have here stated, could have taken place without a particular direction of

providence, no man can suppose whose judgment is governed by the established laws of probability.

We have a more agreeable and domestic instance of this particular direction in the story of Abraham's servant, when he went to seek a wife for his young master Isaac. Upon his arrival at the city of Nahor in Mesopotamia, we are told, "He made his camels to kneel down without the city, by a well of water, at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham: behold, I stand here by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: and let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: Let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac: and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness to my master. And it came to

pass before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out that was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me (I pray thee) drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink, And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not. And it came to pass as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden ear-ring, of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold: and said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee, is there room in thy father's

house for us to lodge in? And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bore unto Nahor. She said moreover unto him, we have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. And the man bowed his head and worshipped the Lord. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren *." There is so much simplicity and nature, such evident traces of divine conduct in this little patriarchal story, that I could not forbear to recite it at length.

The providence of God in the ordinary course of the world, though less marked and conspicuous, is no less real; though it lie concealed under the operation of general laws, framed with such incomprehensible skill as to contain provisions for the smallest events, or hide itself under the exercise of human policy and prudence, its efficacy is

* Gen. xxiv.

still the same; even the sins and follies of men, by its secret conduct, accomplish the ends of infinite wisdom and holiness.

Thus the divine superintendance, though generally unperceived and disregarded, is unremitting and universal, comprehending equally the private affairs of individuals, and the general interests of nations. The scriptures represent the Most High as ruling *in the kingdom of men*, and giving it to whomsoever he will*; as *planting* and *building up* a people, and again for their sins *plucking up* and destroying them†. And we have before seen, that it was usual with the most eminent heathen legislators, to preface their laws with observing, *That every citizen ought first to be persuaded, that the gods are the masters and rulers of the world, and that all things are under their power and providence.*

If men held a nearer converse with the Deity, they would enjoy a quicker perception of his hand in all things; where they now can see only nature and human agency,

* Dan. iv. 25. † Jer. xviii. 7-10.

they would discern the Lord of nature and the Sovereign of the world; the wheels of providence, as in the vision of Ezekiel, would appear *full of eyes round about.*

II. Upon these principles, a good man, such as we have above described, may live without anxiety amidst all the disorders of human life, whether they be of a private or public nature; since he may securely depend on the special protection of that Almighty Being whose dominion is absolute and universal.

If, notwithstanding all his prudent diligence, he is poor and necessitous, he may confidently look to him who *feeds the sparrows* and *clothes the lilies;* if he is threatened with injury by some potent enemy, it will create in him no great alarm when he considers, that He who has the hearts of all in his hands, can easily restrain the mischievous intent, or divert it into another channel; or if he has actually suffered wrong, he may quiet his mind with the reflection, that it could not have happened without his wise permission, who is able to convert it to his greater

advantage; nay, he has ground to be assured, that while he is walking in the ways of piety and virtue, all things, whether prosperous or adverse, are co-operating for his real and permanent benefit.

Such a sense of things, when pure and genuine, must powerfully tend to extinguish in him all discontent, all envy, all resentment, all unmanly fear. He may say to his most formidable adversary,—*Thou canst have no power against me, unless it be given thee from above.* Thy malignity is indeed thine own, but is in itself impotent; and when armed with power, is under a superior control. I fear God, and fear none but him.

Of this heroic piety there have been eminent examples in all ages; and especially under the christian dispensation, the instances are innumerable of those who, supported by its promises, have undergone the most grievous trials with patience and cheerfulness.

Could we at this day look into the interior state of our own country, we should doubtless discover many examples of such

who in humble silence endure the oppressor's wrong, and *all the whips and scorns of time*, borne up by the hopes that christianity inspires. Many servants under hard masters, many among the labouring poor who are disabled by age or sickness, or perishing for want of employment, many in garrets or in cellars, unheeded and unknown, have found the art of possessing their souls in patience, by an access to resources with which few among the great and opulent, or even among the wise and learned, have the happiness to be acquainted. They have been taught to pray to their Father in secret, and to cast all their care upon him who careth for them, while neglected or despised by their fellow-creatures. Compared with these, the heroes and sages of the world, in a moral individual estimate, are vain and insignificant.

When a good man is led to contemplate the politics of the world, it is with this conviction, that all the consultations of states and princes are under a divine superintendance. He is satisfied that *there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel, against*

the Lord *; that *the deceived and the deceiver are his* †; that *he taketh away the heart of the chiefs of a people, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way* ‡. Thus when he mingled *a spirit of giddiness* in their public deliberations, *the princes of Zoan became fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh became brutish, they seduced Egypt, and caused her to err in all her works, as a drunkard staggereth in his vomit* §.

He is equally persuaded, that in the execution of their purposes, the princes and powers of the earth are under the same powerful direction. When the haughty Sennacherib boasted *of the strength of his hand and of his wisdom,* the prophet thus addressed him: *Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith; or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it* ‖ *?* Which shows that this proud Assyrian, in all the career of his successful ambition, was an instrument in the hands of the universal

* Prov. xxi. 30. † Job. xii. 16. ‡ Ib. xii. 24.

§ Isaiah xix. 13, 14, (Bp. Lowth's Translation.)

‖ Isaiah x. 15.

Sovereign, to do what *his counsel determined before to be done.* Accordingly, when beyond the line marked out by this counsel, he had resolved upon the conquest of Judea and its capital, and vaunted as if he had already accomplished his purpose; his army was suddenly destroyed, and himself slain upon his return to his own land. *Because thy rage against me,* says God by his prophet, *is come up into mine ears, I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.—He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there; by the way that he came, by the same shall he return, for I will defend this city to save it for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake**. And the pious christian, who views the dispensations of Providence in the light of scripture, will acknowledge the same over-ruling hand in every conquest and defeat, in every national change and revolution, that has happened since the world began.

He will be sensible that such events, how-

* 2 Kings, chap. xix.

ever calamitous they may be, can never take place without wise and just reasons in the divine mind. He knows that when the Canaanites were exterminated, it was *because their land was defiled, and the measure of their iniquities full**; that when destruction fell upon Tyre, *that crowning city, whose merchants were princes, whose traffickers were the honourable of the earth*; it was to *stain the pride of all glory*†; that when vengeance was threatened against Ninevah, it was for its wickedness which had *ascended to heaven*‡. From these and other innumerable instances he will collect, that public as well as private calamities have respect to moral evil, and that it is never wantonly, or out of mere dominion, that God afflicts or grieves the children of men.

The same divine records will help him to trace the conduct of Providence in the temporary triumph of wicked nations, by presenting them to his view as scourges for the punishment of other nations that are still

* Gen. xv. 16. and Lev. xviii. 24, 25.

† Isa. xxiii. 8, 9. ‡ Jonah i. 2.

more wicked; and doomed, after the service is performed, to be cast away or destroyed themselves. A few passages in proof and illustration of this point, which the reader may peruse when he is disposed and at leisure, I dismiss to the note below *;

* The Almighty is thus introduced speaking of Sennacherib above-named: "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks." Isa. x. 5-12. A similar declaration is made respecting Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, because ye have not heard my words, behold I will send and take all the families of the north, and Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against all the nations round about, and will utterly destroy them.—And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations." Jer. xxv. 8-12.

In another prophecy, a reason is assigned for Ne-

fearing, lest I have already put his patience to a sufficient trial by my copious citation of scripture; for which, the impossibility of finding elsewhere those documents which came home to my present purpose, must be my apology.

From what we have briefly suggested upon this topic, and from the examples we have produced, it may appear, that just views of Providence are powerfully calcu-

buchadnezzar's success against Egypt, which reflects a beautiful light on the equity of Providence in rewarding even temporal services. "It came to pass," says the prophet Ezekiel, "in the seven and twentieth year, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages nor his army for Tyrus, for the service he had served against it. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey, and it shall be the wages for his army: I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord God." Ezekiel xxix. 17-20.

lated to administer support to a man of piety under all reverses; under poverty and oppression, sickness and death. Even amidst the waste and desolation of his country, while he may bewail the wickedness or misconduct which brought on the catastrophe, he will find rest in the consideration, that it could not have taken place without the righteous disposal of the Almighty.

Let it be well observed, that it is only a good man, or, in other words, a man who is subdued to the government and grace of God, to whom this support fully belongs, or who is fully capable of it; such a man only has ground for an entire confidence in the divine favour towards him, amidst all the disorders and troubles to which he is exposed; or is prepared to acquiesce in all the dispensations of heaven towards mankind in general. Others, as they approach to this character, may expect to share in the consolations annexed to it. To all but the obstinate rebel, who will neither submit to the laws of his Creator, nor listen to the

overtures of his mercy, a ray of hope breaks through the thickest gloom of the present state.

One great reason why a wicked man, wicked to the degree now described, can find no satisfaction in the view of Providence, as consisting in the government of God over free agents, is, because it leaves him responsible for his actions, and threatens him with certain vengeance on their account; he is therefore willing to divert his attention from this subject altogether, or perhaps to seek relief in some scheme of necessity, which, whatever other misery it may involve, will, if he can thoroughly persuade himself of it, save him, at least, from the anguish of a guilty conscience, and from the apprehension of any suffering which can properly come under the idea of punishment.

It appears, therefore, of the highest moment, that while we maintain the sinful volitions of men to be subject to divine control, we should exempt them from every kind of absolute necessitation; lest, by contending for the government of God, we de-

stroy the responsibility of man, and remove him out of that state of trial which we are taught to believe he is under during the present life. To guard against this destructive consequence shall be the business of the following section; which, though it may be censured as a digression, the reader, it is presumed, will regard with a favourable allowance, from a consideration of the great and pressing importance of the subject; especially at a season, when the strong hold of necessity is become the last retreat of infidels and atheists, and (what is still more to be lamented) is resorted to as a tower of defence by some who are professed advocates for evangelical religion, to which, in other respects, it is acknowledged they are an ornament.

SECTION III.

On the Importance of distinguishing Providence from Necessity.

THAT the doctrine of necessity is as ancient as the days of our first parents, it would be rashness to assert. It might be supposed, however, without any great improbability, that something of this kind was insinuated in *Adam's* casting his offence upon *Eve*, and *Eve* upon the *serpent*. Be this as it may, it is certain, that an infusion of this doctrine has corrupted the streams both of religion and philosophy almost in all ages, and among all nations of which we have any literary records. Without attempting to demonstrate this by a particular deduction, which would here be unseasonable, I proceed to observe, that it was the felicity of the christian church, either to escape entirely this taint, or to be but slightly infected

with it, till, in the beginning of the fifth century, it was spread far and wide by the famous St. Austin, in the warmth of his zeal against the Pelagians. As a proof of what is here asserted, it may be sufficient to allege the testimony of one who is considered as the most strenuous champion of the predestinarian doctrine in modern times, I mean *Calvin;* who frankly acknowledges, that all the fathers who preceded Austin, spoke so ambiguously and variously upon this point, that an endeavour to establish it upon their authority would be vain and fruitless *. To which he might have added,

* "Magnum mihi præjudicium attulisse forsan videar, qui scriptores omnes Ecclesiasticos, excepto Augustino, ita ambiguè aut variè in hâc re loquutos esse confessus sum, ut certum quippiam ex eorum scriptis haberi nequeat. Hoc enim perinde nonnulli interpretabuntur quasi à suffragii jure depellere ideo ipsos voluerim, quia mihi sint omnes adversarii. Ego verò nihil aliud spectaui quám quòd volui simpliciter ac bona fide consultum piis ingemis: quæ si eorum sententiam hac in parte expectent, semper incertè fluctuabunt: adeò nunc hominem liberi arbitrii viribus spoliatum, ad solam gratiam confugere docent: nunc propiis ipsum armis aut instruunt, aut videntur instruere."

CALV. Inst. lib. ii. cap. 2. sect. 9.

that even *Austin* himself, for some time after his conversion, held the same sentiment with his predecessors *; or rather, I believe, ascribed more than some of them, or than he ought to have done, to the unassisted

* To evince this, the following passage from St. Austin will be sufficient, which I cite from a learned writer, as the original is not at hand. "St. Austin lays down this as the true definition of sin, peccatum est voluntas retinendi, vel consequendi id, quod justitia vetat, et unde liberum est abstinere; *sin is the will to obtain or retain that which justice forbids, and from which it is free for us to abstain* *. Whence he concludes, that no man is worthy of dispraise or punishment, qui id non faciat quod facere non potest, *for not doing that which he hath no power to do;* and that if sin be worthy of dispraise and punishment, it is not to be doubted, tunc esse peccatum cum et liberum est nolle. These things, saith he, the shepherds sing upon the mountains, and the poets in the theatres, and the unlearned in their assemblies, and the learned in their libraries, and the doctors in the schools, and [antistites, in sacris locis, et in orbe terrarum genus humanum] *the bishops in the churches, and mankind throughout the whole earth.* Yea this, saith he, is so manifest, nulla hinc doctorum paucitas, nulla indoctorum turba dissentiat, *that it hath the universal consent of the learned and unlearned* †."

* Lib. de Duab. Animab. c. 11, 12.

† De Vera Rel. c. 14, et 56.

power of the human will*. During the middle ages, the doctrine of the great and

* How much this eminent father of the church overrated the liberty of the will in his first writings, we have his own confession in different places. Thus, in his first book on predestination, chap iii.—"Non sic pius atque humilis doctor ille sapiebat; (Cyprianum beatissimum loquor) qui dixit, in nullo gloriandum quandò nostrum nihil sit. Quod ut ostenderet, adhibuit apostolum testem, dicentem: quid autem habes, quod non accepisti? Si autem accepisti, quid gloriaris, quasi non acceperis? Quo præcipué testimonio etiam convictus sum, cùm similiter errarem putans, fidem, quâ in Deum credimus, non esse donum Dei, sed a nobis esse in nobis, et per illam nos impetrare Dei dona, quibus temperanter et justé et pié vivamus in hoc seculo. Neque enim fidem putabam Dei gratiâ preveniri."—Again, in the first book of his retractions, chap. xxiii.—"Nondum diligentius quæsieram, qualis sit electio gratiæ. Proinde quod continuo dixi: dicit enim idem apostolus: idem Deus, qui operatur omnia in omnibus: nusquam autem dictum est: Deus credit omnia in omnibus: ac deinde subjunxi: quod ergò credimus, nostrum est: quod autem bonum operamur, illius est, qui credentibus dat spiritum sanctum: profecto non diceram, si jam scirem, etiam ipsam fidem inter Dei munera reperiri, quæ dantur in eodem spiritu.—Et quod paullo pòst dixi: nostrum est enim credere et velle: illius autem dare credentibus et volentibus facultatem bene operandi per Spiritum sanctum, per quem caritas diffunditur in cor-

pious African bishop was revived at different periods; in the ninth century, by the monk *Godeschalchus,* and was by turns condemned and justified in several councils*; in the thirteenth, by the *Dominicans,* or *preaching friars,* and by them carried to still greater rigours. At the reformation it was taken up by *Luther,* who was himself an *Augustinian* monk, though afterwards it was relinquished by his followers, and is so at this day. *Calvin,* as we have above observed, adopted the same doctrine, aggravated, as would seem, by a degree of severity of his own†; unless we should suppose that he

dibus nostris: verum est quidem, sed eâdem regulâ et utrumque ipsius est, quia ipse præparat voluntatem; et utrumque nostrum, quia non fit, nisi volentibus nobis."

Upon these passages *Vossius* remarks, "Neutiquam pro calumniâ haberi debere, quòd multi dicerent, ipsum priùs Augustinum ea docuisse, quæ in Massiliensibus posteà damnaret." Hist. Pelag. lib. iv. Pars 2. Thesis 1.

* See Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 156-8.

† "Quum non alia ratione quæ futura sunt prævideat, nisi quia ita ut fierent decrevit; frustrà de præscientiâ lis movetur, ubi constat ordinatione potiùs et nutu omnia evenire.

"Disertis verbis hoc extare negant, decretum fuisse à

had drawn it from *Thomas Aquinas*, or some other of the dominican doctors *, who, in

Deo ut sua defectione periret Adam. Quasi verò idem ille Deus, quem scriptura prædicat facere quæcunque vult, ambiguo fine condiderit noblissimam ex suis creaturis."

CALV. Instit. lib. iii. c. 23. sect, 6, 7.

* That this is no strained or illiberal supposition, may appear from the following passage of *Jurieu*, a very eminent and zealous Calvinist, who, having described the conduct of *Arnaud* towards the *Jesuits*, proceeds to observe, " C'est justement ainsi qu'il agit avec les Calvinistes au sujet de la grace. Les Calvinistes sur ce point n'enseignent précisement que ce qu'enseignent les Thomistes. Les docteurs de l'Eglise Romaine eux-mêmes nous en sont témoins, comme nous verrons quelque part avant que de finir cette matiere. Cependant quand on dispute sur la grace ; en se tournant du côté des Calvinistes, il faut appeller leur doctrine *impie*, *folle*, *heretique* ; mais en se tournant du côté des Thomistes, il faut reconnoitre la même doctrine pour être Catholique, la pure theologie de St. Paul et de St. Augustin."

Here then we see that the doctrine of grace, as taught by *Calvinists*, is according to *Jurieu*, who was one of its greatest and ablest defenders, and, in the opinion too of the Roman catholic doctors themselves, perfectly the same with that of *Aquinas* ; a man held by the Romish church in such high estimation for his understanding, that he was denominated *the angel of the*

subtlety of genius, and in high and curious notions, appear to have surpassed either of our two great reformers; whose inferiority, in these respects, may be allowed without any derogation to their praise *. From Calvin were chiefly derived the confessions of the reformed churches abroad, as distinguished from the Lutheran; and the church of England, so far as her doctrinal articles are concerned, seems nearly to agree with the reformed standard. Let it be observed,

schools; and for his sanctity, that he was enrolled in the catalogue of her saints.

* Calvin, in the excellent preface to his *institutions*, addressed to the French king, Francis the First, justly condemns those curious wits, who waste their lives in such subtle speculations, as only serve to obscure and perplex the simplicity of scripture, and this to a degree, that, (as he observes) *Were the fathers to rise again, and witness that contentious art which has passed under the title of* speculative theology, *they could never imagine that the* Deity *was the subject of discussion* *. Happy! if this eminent man had never exposed himself to a just retortion of the same censure!

* "Si nunc patres suscitentur, et hujusmodi jurgandi artem audiant, quam speculativam theologiam appellant isti, nihil minùs credant quàm de Deo huberi disputationem." CALV. Præf. ad Regem. Gal.

that the notion of necessity advanced by Austin, and which is still retained in substance by those who are now styled moderate Calvinists, is confined to man in his present lapsed state; and in this state, is limited to the spiritual life: for in things purely natural or civil, his power to *will* and *act* differently, in the same circumstances, is acknowledged *: whereas the necessity which we have here immediately in view, and which by some is denominated *philosophical*, is made to extend itself absolutely and universally; so that not only man, both lapsed and innocent, but every being whatever, with every circumstance attending it, whether internal or external, is subjected to its sway. This is the necessity, which in these latter times has been revived, under different modifica ions, by Hobbes and Spi-

* This Calvin states to be the common opinion of theological writers before his time. "Communiter solent res medias, quæ scilicet nihil ad regnum Dei pertinent, sub libero hominis consilio ponere; veram autem justitiam ad specialem Dei gratiam, et spiritualem regenerationem referre." CALV. Inst. lib. ii. c. 2. sect. 5.

noza; and more lately by Mirabeau, Helvetius, Diderot, Voltaire, and the whole herd of French atheists and philosophers; and in our own country by Hume, Lord Kaimes, Dr. Hartley, (who deserved to be in better company) and Dr. Priestley; with others of minor quality. And what shall I say? even men who stand forth as zealous advocates for evangelical doctrine, justly offended with the vain panegyrics which are sometimes pronounced upon human power and worthiness, and smitten with the fair pretences of humility and dependance held out in the scheme of necessity *; and

† "Le Fataliste n'est point en droit d'être vain de ses propres talents, ou de ses vertus; il sait que ces qualités ne sont que des suites de son organisation naturelle, modifiée par des circonstances qui n'ont nullement dépendu de lui. Il n'aura ni haine ni mépris peur ceux que la nature et les circonstances n'auront point favorisés comme lui. C'est le fataliste qui doit être humble et modeste par principe; n'est-il pas forcé de reconnoître qu'il ne possede rien qu'il n'ait reçu?" Systéme de la Nature, p. 191.

But notwithstanding this strain of philosophical humility, it may appear from the following passage of this hapless author, that even the notion of fatalism itself was not always sufficient to preserve him from something

also led on and encouraged by the example of a pious and ingenious writer*; have

like vain-glorying. If it suffered him not to glory in his liberty, he tried hard to glory (if I may be allowed the expression) *in his machinery*. The passage is singular, and were it not for the gravity of the subject, might amuse some readers as a philosophical curiosity. It is as follows:

"Que l'on ne nous dit point que c'est dégrader l'homme, que de réduire ses fonctions à un pur méchanisme; que c'est honteusement l'avilir, que de le comparer à un arbre, à une végétation abjecte.—Le philosophe, exempt de préjugés, n'entend point ce langage inventé par l'ignorance de ce qui constitue la vraie dignité de l'homme. Un arbre est un objet qui, dans son espece, joint l'utile à l'agréable; il mérite notre affection, quand il produit des fruits doux et une ombre favorable. Toute machine est précieuse, dès qu'elle est vraiment utile, et remplit fidélement les fonctions auxquelles on la destine. Oui, Je le dis avec courage, l'homme de bien, quand il a des talents et des vertus, est, pour les êtres de son espece, un arbre qui leur fournit et des fruits et de l'ombrage. L'homme de bien est une machine dont les ressorts sont adaptés de maniere à remplir leurs fonctions d'une façon qui doit plaire. Non, Je ne rougirai pas d'être une machine de ce genre." Systéme de la Nature, p. 192.

* The late Rev. Mr. *Edwards*, of New England, of whom Dr. Priestley observes with much probability, "Had this ingenious writer lived a little longer, and reflected on the natural connection and tendency of his senti-

passed over to their most formidable adversaries, and fight under the same banner with infidels and atheists*, though intention-

ments, he could not but have seen things in a very different light."

Preface to his Examination of Reid's Enquiry, &c. p. 16-17.

* This has long appeared to me a melancholy fact; and it is one which has not escaped the acute observation of a very respectable man, and an eminent philosopher. "Some good men," he remarks, "apprehending that, to kill pride and vain-glory, our active powers cannot be too much depressed, have been led, by zeal for religion, to deprive us of all active power.

"Other good men, by a like zeal, have been led to depreciate the human understanding, and to put out the light of nature and reason, in order to exalt that of revelation.

"Those weapons which were taken up in support of religion, are now employed to overturn it; and what was, by some, accounted the bulwark of orthodoxy, is become the strong hold of atheism and infidelity.

"Atheists join hands with theologians, in depriving man of all active power, that they may destroy all moral obligation, and all sense of right and wrong. They join hands with theologians, in depreciating the human understanding, that they may lead us into absoluse scepticism."

REID's Essays on the Powers of the Human Mind, vol. iii. p. 450-1.

tionally for contrary ends and purposes. This apparently is a post of so much danger to themselves, and so injurious to the cause which they mean to maintain, that it may deserve their most serious consideration, whether they are not called upon by every reason both of duty and of safety, *to flee from the tents of these wicked* or *mistaken* men; and though every other argument should fail, whether the following consequences, and these deduced by an author who had long studied the subject, who had been bred up in the same school with themselves, and like them too had gone over to the camp of the enemy, ought not to produce at least very alarming doubts of the doctrine in question, and to be deemed alone sufficient to determine their conduct.

The author here intended is one we have already mentioned, the late Dr. *Priestley*, who, after his *revered master*, as he somewhere calls Dr. *Hartley*, endeavours to substitute fatalism in the place of providence; and to transform the moral world into a system of intellectual machinery. He maintains, that infinite wisdom sees nothing in

the universe that is not a *necessary and useful part of a perfect whole* * ; that the distinction between things natural and moral is groundless † ; that a man is no more accountable for his vices than for his misfortunes ‡ ; that all remorse of conscience is a deception, and arises entirely from a narrowness of comprehension § ; that a thoroughly enlightened necessitarian, when he looks back upon his actions, sees them all to be perfectly right ; and that the doctrine of repentance, confession, and pardon, are founded upon an *imperfect and fallacious view of things* ‖.

* "To God nothing is seen as an evil, but as a necessary and useful part of a perfect whole." PRIESTLEY'S Doct. of Necessity, p. 114.

† "The distinction between things natural and moral entirely ceases on the scheme of necessity." Ibid. p. 115.

‡ "The vices of men come under the class of common evils." Ibid.

§ "You say that remorse of conscience implies that a man thinks that he could have acted otherwise than he did. I have no objection to this ; at the same time that I say, he deceives himself in that supposition." PR. Def. of Necessity, p. 62. In the preceding page he ascribes it to "want of comprehension."

‖ "It is acknowledged that a necessitarian, who, as

According to this scheme, the emperor Nero might deliberately have recalled to his remembrance the burning of Rome, which he charged upon the christians; his unnatural practices; the murder of Britannicus and Seneca; of his wives and his mother Agrippina; and of all his other enormous crimes; without the least reproach of conscience: since whatever he had done, was both right in itself, and absolutely inevitable. For want of this knowledge, after the death of Agrippina, as we are told by Suetonius*, he fell under the scourges of a guilty conscience,

such, believes that, strictly speaking, nothing goes wrong, cannot accuse himself of having done wrong in the ultimate sense of the words. He has, therefore, in this strict sense, nothing to do with repentance, confession, or pardon, which are all adapted to a different, imperfect, and fallacious view of things."

Correspondence with Dr. Price, p. 301.

* "Neque tamen sceleris conscientiam, quanquàm et militum et senatûs populique gratulationibus confirmaretur, aut statim aut unquam posteà ferre potuit: sæpe confessus exagitari se maternâ specie, verberibus furiarum, ac tædis ardentibus."

SUET. ch. XXXIV.

frequently declaring, that he was haunted by his mother's ghost, and pursued by the whips and burning torches of the furies. Unhappy Nero! who had not learned that the murder of a mother was a deed which neither called for *repentance, confession,* or *pardon.*

How would the profound Tiberius, another monster of vice, have rejoiced in the discovery, that he had been guilty of nothing which ought either to make him afraid or ashamed! He would not then have expressed himself to the senate in these terms: "What I should write to you, or how I should write to you, or whether I should at all write to you at this time, may all the gods pour upon my head a more terrible vengeance than that I feel myself daily sinking under, if I can tell *." Thus, says Tacitus, was his conscience terrified with the image of his crimes, nor could either his for-

* "Quid scribam vobis, S. C. aut quo modo scribam, aut quid omnino non scribam hoc tempore, dii me deæque pejus perdant, quàm perire quotidiè sentio, si scio." TAC. An. lib. vi. 65.

tune or his solitude afford him the least relief*.

To mention only one instance more: With what joy would Judas Iscariot have learned, that he had not sinned *in betraying innocent blood,* when, in despair of pardon, he threw down the thirty pieces of silver before the high priest, and then went and hanged himself!

Whether any man's moral constitution is strong enough to resist such poison, I cannot tell. It was promised to the first christian converts, that *though they drank any deadly thing it should not hurt them;* and I should look upon it no less miraculous in morals, for any one to admit the scheme of necessity, crude and unqualified as it has lately been presented to the world, without experiencing its destructive effects. Poisons we know may be corrected, and even sometimes made salutary by a due mixture of other ingredients; and the worst principles,

* "Quippe Tiberium non fortuna, non solitudines protegebant, quin tormenta pectoris, suasque ipse pænas fateretur." TAC. An. lib. vi. 65.

when taken up by good men, commonly undergo so many modifications and practical corrections, as to become, though not salutary, yet less pernicious.

Say not thou, God hath caused me to err; for he hath no need of the sinful man *. Though this was written by an apocryphal author, I take the sense to be perfectly canonical, and expressly confirmed by canonical scripture. We read in the epistle of James, *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.—Do not err, my beloved brethren; every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights* †. Whence then is evil? This is an ancient question, and the answer to it is one and simple, *from the abuse of liberty.* If you press me further, and ask, Why the Almighty endued any of his creatures with a power which he foresaw they would abuse? I would answer, Because he foresaw likewise that the abuse might be over-ruled to ends wor-

* Ecclesiasticus xv. 12. † James i. 13-17.

thy of his infinite wisdom. If you reply, This is saying but little, and can never satisfy the curiosity of a philosopher:—Allowing this, it may be sufficient notwithstanding to satisfy the modesty of a christian *.

* "If it be asked, Why does God permit so much sin in his creation? I confess I cannot answer the question, but must lay my hand upon my mouth. He giveth no account of his conduct to the children of men. It is our part to obey his commands, and not to say unto him, Why dost thou thus?

"Hypotheses might be framed; but, while we have ground to be satisfied, that he does nothing but what is right, it is more becoming us to acknowledge, that the ends and reasons of his universal government are beyond our knowledge, and perhaps beyond the comprehension of human understanding. We cannot penetrate so far into the counsel of the Almighty, as to know all the reasons why it became him, *of whom are all things, and to whom are all things*, to create, not only machines, which are solely moved by his hands, but servants and children, who, by obeying his commands, and imitating his moral perfections, might rise to a high degree of glory and happiness in his favour, or, by perverse disobedience, might incur guilt and just punishment. In this he appears to us awful in his justice, as well as amiable in his goodness.

"But, as he disdains not to appeal to men for the equity of his proceedings towards them when his cha-

There never, I believe, was a time when men delivered their opinions with more hardiness than at present, or with a more frank avowal of their consequences, however shocking they may be to common sense, or offensive to virtue and piety. This bold procedure, although its effect upon weak or corrupt minds is to be often lamented, we may hope is sometimes of service in awakening the caution of the more sober and discerning. Such as are of this character, upon finding, for instance, that the doctrine of necessity, when followed up with intrepidity, leads to consequences which they justly regard with horror, may learn to look with a prudent jealousy on any opinion that has a close affinity with it, by whatever authority, or under whatever pretences it may come recommended.

The path of truth is often narrow and

racter is impeached, we may, with humble reverence, plead for God, and vindicate that moral excellence which is the glory of his nature, and of which the image is the glory and the perfection of man."

REID's Essays on the Powers of the Human Mind, vol. iii. p. 444-5.

arduous; like some passages over the Alps, where it is dangerous to look on either side, as by misplacing a single step the traveller plunges down a precipice. The doctrines of providence and human liberty are confessedly of this nature; which should excite the utmost wariness in those who endeavour to trace them, lest they should either degrade man into a piece of mechanism, or withdraw him from his proper state of dependance; lest they should philosophize providence into fate, or detract from its overruling direction.

Observing this medium, a good man will keep on his way across the precipices of error, and amidst the winds of warring opinions, unshaken and serene. If he looks back to his original creation, it will be with thankfulness; if onward to his final destiny, it will be with hope; and when he surveys the present disordered state of the world, and sees multitudes of his fellow-creatures,

> "Living in hatred, enmity, and strife
> Among themselves, and levying cruel wars,
> Wasting the earth, each other to destroy."

This, though it will move his sorrow, will not destroy his peace; he will view all this evil under a divine control, and unite in reverent confession with the royal prophet, *The wrath of man shall praise God; the remainder of wrath he will restrain* *.

* Psalm lxxvi. 10.

SECTION IV.

Containing some relieving Considerations, drawn from particular Topics;—from the pliability of Man to his external Situation;—from the great and good Examples frequently displayed in a hostile Period;—and from the general Vanity and unimportance of the World.

THUS far of the general doctrine of a superintending Providence, and of the support it may afford to good men amidst all the evils which either they contemplate in the world around them, or which they are called to suffer themselves. We shall now proceed to some more particular topics, which may contribute to the same purpose.

I. The power there is in our nature to adapt itself to a wonderful variety of circumstances, may yield some relieving considerations to every benevolent mind while it surveys the present state of things. Man

can derive his nourishment from a greater variety of food than any other animal, and endure a greater diversity of climate; he is found in all latitudes, and can pass from the equator to the pole without material inconvenience. His mind is no less capable of forming itself to his political situation, with very little assistance from learning, or moral discipline. The great mass of mankind who are born to poverty and toil, are generally as satisfied with their humble lot, from being early accustomed to it, as those who occupy the superior ranks of life appear to be with theirs.

Nor will oppression itself, superadded to daily drudgery, totally embitter human life, if the yoke be not at once so galling and unremitting, as that the bruises it inflicts have no time to heal.

Should we look into those despotic states where acts of extreme violence are rare, we might possibly find that the bulk of the people pass their lives with tolerable ease and quiet. The peasants whose abode is at the foot of Vesuvius, although they often hear the mountain rumble, and see it now

and then emit volumes of smoke, mingled with fire, and sometimes perhaps are sprinkled with its ashes; yet, knowing that those eruptions which endanger their lives and property are used to happen only after long intervals, will continue to cultivate their vineyards, and pursue their various occupations, with as little fear or uneasiness as if they dwelt at a hundred leagues distance.

II. Again: The most stormy periods in these latter ages have been tempered and illuminated with many generous displays of humanity and courtesy, which I suppose no one can contemplate without emotions of delight and satisfaction. To multiply examples would be unnecessary, as they will easily occur to every one who is the least acquainted with general history; and those he will find most impressive which he has observed for himself. I shall only specify the following, which first offer themselves to my recollection.

The noble behaviour of the renowned and gallant son of our Edward the Third towards the French king, who became his

prisoner at the battle of Poictiers, must, at the time, have greatly softened the anguish of defeat, and darted a cheering ray through the general horrors of war; and has since found a sympathy in every heart*. The conduct of the duke of Guise, during the intestine broils of France, towards the prince of Condè, who fell into his hands at the battle of Dreux, displayed a similar mag-

* "Edward ordered a magnificent repast to be prepared in his tent, and he himself served the royal captive as if he had been one of the retinue; he stood at the king's back during the meal, constantly refused to take a place at table, and declared, that being a subject, he was too well acquainted with the distance between his own rank, and that of royal majesty, to assume such freedom."—"Upon his landing at Southwark, he was met by a prodigious concourse of people, of all ranks and stations. The prisoner was clad in royal apparel, and mounted on a white steed;—the conqueror rode by his side in meaner attire, and carried by a black palfry. In this situation, much more glorious than all the insolent parade of a Roman triumph, he passed through the streets of London, and presented the king of France to his father, who advanced to meet him with the same courtesy, as if he had been a neighbouring potentate, that had voluntarily come to pay him a friendly visit." See Hume's Hist. of England.

nanimity, and could not fail of producing the same effects; the duke nobly entertained his captive at his own table, and admitted him to share the same bed, though before they had lived upon terms of the bitterest enmity *. At the termination of the catholic league, which had directed its force against Henry the Fourth of France, the duke of *Maine*, who had been its last chief, came to make his submission to the king at *Monceaux*. The king received him with the greatest cordiality, and taking him by the hand, conducted him through his park, and pointed out to him the various improvements and embellishments he had in contemplation. As they walked at a good pace, the duke, who was corpulent and crippled with the *sciatica*, found it difficult to keep up with his company; which the king observing, My cousin, said he, we go too fast for you. To which the duke assenting, added, that he found himself quite spent, and was ready to drop down with heat and suffocation. *Hold you there, my cousin*, said

* See Thuanus.

the king pleasantly, tapping him on the shoulder, *'Tis the only revenge you will ever experience from me* *. A more recent and domestic instance of modest heroism, and, in my opinion, no less worthy of celebration, I shall take the liberty to add on this occasion. In the late American revolution, when a large body of the British forces were compelled to yield up their arms at a certain place assigned, the Americans, to spare the feelings of the vanquished, kept closely within their lines during this humiliating ceremony; an act which showed these brave colonists worthy of the independence for which they fought. In general, the humanity with which wars have been waged in modern times, opposed to their former ferocity, affords matter of consolatry reflection amidst all the evils that necessarily attend them.

The great and good characters which are formed and eminently displayed in a turbu-

* See *Memoires de Sully*, tom. iii. p. 57-9, where the story is told with admirable *naiveté*.

lent period, is an advantage growing out of public calamity, which every man is called upon to improve to his own profit. Had there been no civil commotions at the time of the reformation, the world would have wanted the illustrious example of John Frederic, elector of Saxony, who bravely stood forth the defender of the new doctrines, and whose unshaken magnanimity, both in prosperous and adverse fortune, ranked him, says Thuanus, amongst the greatest of mankind, even in the judgment of his enemies*. Had not the labouring cause of political and religious liberty called forth the heroic Gustavus Adolphus, we should not have been told that, upon his debarking in the isle of Usedom, at the commencement of the Germanic war, he fell upon his knees in the presence of his army, and then turning round to his officers,

* When he was made prisoner by the emperor, and practised with in the article of religion, he nobly declared, that death was to him more eligible, than to trifle with God or man by betraying his sentiments through a mean worldly policy.

observed, with his usual animation, *that a good christian would not make a bad soldier* *. To the civil wars of France we owe the example of Coligny's invincible fortitude, always great in his misfortunes, but never greater than at his death. Compare him with Cato in his last moments, and you will perceive the infinite disparity †. I have

* Harte's Life of Gustavus, vol. i. p. 153.

† Having long combated in defence of the reformed religion, and from every defeat returning to the charge more formidable than he was before, he fell at last by treachery, who could not be subdued by arms. Deceived by the oaths and flatteries of his prince, Charles the Ninth, he was butchered at the massacre of Paris, together with thousands of his brethren. Just before this bloody tragedy, he observed to those around him, "I perceive they are about to take my life; this event I have long foreseen without fear, and am now prepared to meet it with resignation. I think myself happy to die in full possession of my faculties, to die in God, whose grace supports me by a sure hope of eternal life." Having scarcely dismissed his friends out of concern for their safety, the assassin broke into his apartment, and asking him, "Art thou Coligny?" "I am," he replied with an air of composure, adding, "Young man, thou oughtest to respect my grey hairs;—but do what thou intendest." Immediately he received the dagger in his

selected these instances, because the present age has need to be admonished, that there is no such invincible opposition between piety and true greatness, as some maintain, and others are ready to imagine.

To these considerations we may add the uncertain event of wars and national commotions, both in their immediate and more remote consequences, often so very different from all that the greatest human sagacity would have judged probable; which should equally serve to check our presumption, and to moderate our fears; should neither suffer us to be vainly elated with success, nor *to despair of the public* in the most threatening conjuncture; much less to be played upon by every political prognosticator, to dance when he is pleased to pipe, or when he mourns, to sink down in hopeless dejection.

III. Further; a serious contemplation of the general vanity of the world, whatever

bosom. For this account we are indebted to the impartial Thuanus.

external form it assumes, may, by lessening our expectations from it, at least help to mitigate the anguish of disappointment, which, we all know, is one of the bitterest ingredients in the cup of human misery. Proofs of this vanity urge us on every side, and, at intervals, make impression on every mind; yet men generally continue to hug the illusion they are under till it is torn from them by the hand of death. When Henry the Fourth of France was murdered by Ravaillac, just at the time he was entering upon his great enterprize, which it is supposed was projected with a view to reduce all Europe into one republic; his last words are recorded to have been, *Ce n'est rien;* "'Tis nothing;" which I am willing to understand as expressing his sense, at that awful moment, of the vanity that cleaves to all worldly designs and expectations; a sentiment naturally arising from his situation, and which almost every man feels the truth of when he comes to die.

As man, when he is called from this world, enters into an unchangeable state of happiness or misery, reason tells him, that

he ought to value every thing on this side the grave, according to the help it may afford him to avoid the one and secure the other. When he has learned this lesson, and is made thoroughly sensible of its importance, he will look on human life with different eyes than he did before.

Those things which are generally regarded with dread, such as sickness, poverty, and disgrace, he will contemplate under a less frightful aspect, as serving to weaken his present attachments, and induce a serious consideration of what will be hereafter; and those things which are generally the objects of eager competition, will rather excite his caution than his envy, as by drawing men's affections to this life, they diminish their concern for the next.

When in like manner he views the affairs of nations in the light of futurity, he will see them to be of little importance, except as they relate to the interests of true religion and rational liberty; which are here placed together, as the latter is generally necessary to the success of the former. Whether the white or the red rose has the

prevalence, whether a certain province or branch of commerce is in the hands of one nation or another, he will regard as matters of small consequence in themselves considered. All wars of trade or ambition, further than as they affect the interests above-named, will give him no disturbance; or, at most, will excite only an emotion of pity or indignation, for human weakness or wickedness.

SECTION V.

Relieving Considerations amidst the many literary, political, and religious Contentions that so often agitate human Life; with some concluding Reflections.

FROM military feuds let us turn our attention for a moment to literary, political, and religious contentions, and try, as in the preceding cases, if we can discover any diminishing circumstances, which may help us to view them with more tranquillity.

I. It is disgraceful to human reason to find how much learned controversy has been lavished upon mere words and names. In the reign of Henry the Eighth, a curious dispute arose at Cambridge, concerning the right method of pronouncing the Greek tongue. Sir John Cheke, at the head of one party, stood up for a full and broad

pronunciation; Dr. Cajus, at the head of the opposite party, defended the old practice. The business was carried on for some time with much heat, till Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, who was then chancellor of the university, interposed; and, as might be expected, passed sentence against the innovators, with a penalty on all such as presumed to adopt the new method, which, notwithstanding his decree, afterwards generally prevailed *. A like notable contest was kindled at Paris, betwixt the university there, and the *college royal*, upon the right way of pronouncing the *Latin* language; and particularly whether the two words *quisquis* and *quanquam*, should be pronounced *kiskis* and *kankam*, or not; the university contending for the affirmative, and the college for the negative. At length the matter grew so serious, that it came under the cognizance of the parliament, who, after grave deliberation no doubt, wisely determined to leave both parties to

* Fuller's History of the University of Cambridge, p. 119-20.

their own discretion *. Again: What immense pains have been taken by learned

* Perhaps it may amuse some readers to see this erudite controversy more at length, as follows:

" Si dès contestations élevées au sujet de l'orthographe, nous passons à celles qu'a suscitées la prononciation, nous verrons encore les grammariens divisés. L'impossibilité de sçavoir comment il faut prononcer la plupârt des mots Latins, et les idées, à cet égard, des modernes Latinistes, mirent autrefois en combustion l'université de Paris et le collège royal. De serviles compilateurs des phrases, d'une langue qu'on a bien de la peine à entendre, plus amateurs des mots que des choses, osèrent se donner pour des oracles en fait de prononciation. Mais, nonobstant l'infaillibilité que chacun s'attribuoit, ils ne furent pas moins en guerre pour sçavoir de quelle manière on prononceroit les deux mots *quisquis* et *quamquam*. L'université de Paris vouloit qu'on prononçât *kiskis*, *kankam*. Quelques professeurs du *collège royal*, nouvellement établis, jaloux de se faire un nom dans le monde Latin, étoient d'avis contraire. Ils opinoient fortement pour qu'on prononçât *quisquis*, *quanquam*. Cette derniere prononciation etoit alors une nouveauté. La Sorbonne la crut dangereuse pour la religion et pour l'état: elle anathématisa quiconque ne se conformeroit point à la prononciation d'usage dans les écoles.

" Les professeurs royaux se mocquèrent des pareilles censures. Ils prononcèrent le Latin comme ils crurent devoir le faire, et engagèrent à un coup d'éclat un jeune bachelier, plus ardent encore qu'eux pour la nouvelle

men in editing the heathen classics, and what vehement contentions have thence arisen, must be known by every one who is the least acquainted with the history of literature. Let one instance suffice for all. In the works of *Terence* alone, contained in a small pocket volume, have been noted, we are told, no less than thirty thousand different readings*; which, at a moderate

prononciation. Cet abbé, au mépris des ordres reitérés de la Sorbonne, pronoçoit partout avec affectation *quisquis* et *quanquam*. Il fut bintôt cité au tribunal de la faculté de théologie, qui vouloit le dépouiller du revenu de ses bénéfices. Appel sur le champ de la part de l'abbé au parlement: l'affaire alloit devenir sérieuse; mais les professeurs royaux, engagés d'honneur à ne pas laisser condamner le plus zélé defenseur de leur opinion, allèrent en corps a l'audience, représentèrent avec eloquence à la cour l'injustice des procédés de la Sorbonne. Le parlement eut égard à la prière, et à la qualité des supplians. Il retablit l'abbé dans tous ses droits, et laissa chacun libre de prononcer le Latin comme on voudroit."

Querelles Litteraires, tom. ii. p. 121-3.

* I advance this from memory, and on the authority of Dr. Bentley, (under the assumed name of *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis)* in his excellent remarks on Collins' *Discourse of Free-thinking*.

computation, must have occasioned fifteen thousand critical disputes; and all this learned toil and contention spent upon an old play-book!

These wars and occupations of grammarians and critics, were it not for the waste of time and talent which they occasion, might divert a sober man in a weary hour; to see such *labor ineptiarum*, so many *difficiles nugæ*, the arrantest trifles treated with such airs of importance, such eagerness of opposition, and pompous declamation. One might suppose the safety of the country depended upon settling a reading in Virgil or Horace, and that a happy emendation merited a public triumph. "*The glory*," says Sanadon, "of this correction (namely, of *si* for *sic*, in one of the odes of Horace) is due to Rodellius †."

Nor have the lucubrations and strifes of the learned been less idly employed upon points of ancient history, chronology, and geography. What is it to us whether the siege of Troy, as sung by Homer, was in

* See Francis's Horace, lib. i. carm. 16.

the main a reality or a fiction?—Whether some undoubted historical event, allowed to have happened several thousand years ago, and now become of no consequence, fell out a few years sooner or later?—Or whether a certain city of the same antiquity, was situated on a mountain or a plain, on this or the other side of a river, and had walls a hundred cubits high, or only fifty? Yet these, or similar disquisitions, have often occupied the learned world, and excited the wonder or ridicule of the unlearned.

Among the subjects of philosophical and metaphysical debate, it is a consolation to reflect, that many of them are unmeaning or frivolous, many too abstruse for vulgar minds, and many too wild and absurd to be generally mischievous. Besides it must be remembered, that in these intellectual collisions, light is sometimes struck out which leads to useful discoveries.

How much has the speculative part of mankind been agitated, at different periods, by questions such as the following: Are substantial forms distinguishable from the

matter in which they are supposed to exist?—Are *genera* and *species*, *entia rationis?*—Can an accident pass from one subject to another?—Are the essences of things indivisible or eternal?—Is eternity a successive duration?—Does the divine knowledge comprehend *negations* and *privations?*—Is there any heat in fire or smell in a rose?—Is there an external world, or, in other words, are sun, moon, and stars, our rivers and cities, our fleets and armies, nothing more than unsubstantial visions, or bare ideas in the mind?—These are questions which have produced, and others like them, or the same may again produce, much subtle controversy among persons of a curious, inquisitive, or sceptical turn; but are never likely to make any serious impression upon the great mass of mankind, who are happily too busy or too dull to interest themselves in such idle, absurd, yet often dangerous speculations.

II. In the discussion of political questions, as they generally come nearer to our interests, there is more need to watch over

our peace. No wise man will venture upon these seas unless compelled by his duty; and should his situation in life require him to take a part in such discussions, he will be careful to conduct himself with moderation, to make every equitable concession to his opponents, and to maintain a prudent jealousy of his own opinions and party.

It is a relief amidst such controversies to consider, that, by a lively display of the natural rights of man on the one hand, and the necessity of government and subordination on the other, they may equally serve to check the tyranny of rulers, and to enforce a due obedience on the part of the subject.

And though it is true that political opinions are often no more than the pretexts of interest or ambition, of men out of place, who endeavour to supplant those who are in; yet even in this case we must not forget, that in the present corrupt state, where all power is in so much danger of abuse, no free government is likely to continue long without a vigilant opposition; and if true patriots step not forward to undertake this service, it may be better to have it performed

by others who falsely assume the title, than to see it absolutely abandoned. Indeed to maintain an exact poise may be deemed impracticable; the balance will be sure to incline on one side; and all that can be done by the most disinterested and enlightened patriotism, is, by constitutional and seasonable checks, to preserve the state from running into the extreme either of tyranny or anarchy; evils, of such a magnitude, that it may not be easy to determine which of them is greater, or which more strongly indicates the avenging hand of heaven against a sinful nation. On the whole, however, I conceive the world to have suffered most from the former, which sometimes by open violence, and oftener by a secret corrosion, has destroyed the peace and comfort of millions. It is an evil which may endure for ages; whereas anarchical commotions, like hurricanes or earthquakes, though frequently tremendous while they continue, are of a transient nature. Hence of all human interests, none is more sacred than that of rational liberty; and of all human characters, none more honourable than that

of a temperate and steady advocate for the natural and just rights of mankind.

III. Amidst this noisy contentious world it might have been expected, that the church, at least, would have proved a calm and quiet refuge; yet the case is often much otherwise. Besides its tossings from without, this harbour is subject to many internal commotions of its own; it is the best however we can meet with on this side heaven.

I shall here assume what, I suppose, will easily be granted, that notwithstanding the various heresies which from time to time have rent the peace of christian societies, of those differences which have divided truly good men, the greater part have been of small moment, and the rest more in name than in reality.

He, therefore, who duly consults his religious quiet, will direct his attention to those points in which he observes humble and pious christians are essentially agreed, and will studiously endeavour to avoid all nominal and unimportant controversy.

Should any infidel here ask insultingly, And what are those points in which good christians are thus agreed? I will tell him a few. They are thus agreed in holding the insufficiency of mere reason to instruct us in the great concern of religion: he holds the contrary. They are thus agreed in expecting remission and divine acceptance only through a mediator: this expectation he renounces. And lastly, in order to restore to our nature its capacity of true happiness by the renovation of its moral powers, they are thus agreed in holding the necessity of a divine agency: which he derides. In these points they are in agreement as to the substance, though they may differ as to the mode in which they choose to conceive or express them.

Again, it will be useful to consider, that parties in religion (as well as in government) may be attended with considerable advantages, to put in balance with their evils. They may not only serve to keep one another in check, which is sometimes necessary to the preservation of general liberty; but also to kindle a laudable emu-

lation, which may happily contribute to the advancement both of liberty, truth, and piety. And it appears evidently the design of the apostle Paul, by displaying the progress of the gospel among the Gentiles, to call forth this spirit among his countrymen the Jews *.

Since the time of Luther it must, I think, be allowed, that the Roman catholic clergy have been less corrupt in doctrine, more exemplary in their lives, and more distinguished for learning, than before that period; and that this, in part at least, may justly be considered as the effect of protestantism. By observing the eminent literary abilities and fervent unsophisticated piety of many of the reformers, and by the free discussion to which the doctrine and worship they had received by tradition were now subjected, they appear in some degree to have been roused from the long slumber of superstition and ignorance into which they had fallen, and gradually led to make concessions and qualifying explanations, which cannot, in

* Rom. xi. 14.

every instance, be imputed to a base design of ensnaring their opponents, without a gross offence both to charity and probability.

In the war to which christianity is exposed from without, I will touch a few particulars, which may help to allay the fears, and encourage the hopes of its disciples, notwithstanding all the triumphs of unbelievers.

To hear the language of these men, it might be supposed that victory had decided so entirely in their favour, as scarcely to leave room to expect that even the name of christianity would long continue; and it must be acknowledged, that no skill or exertion has been wanting, on their part, to procure its total extinction.

It has been said, that *the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church.* Aware of the truth of this, and not merely for want of power, its modern adversaries condemn all recourse to fire and sword, and have commonly made their assaults in the less violent way of argument and raillery.

What was observed of Cæsar, that he

came *sober and collected to the overthrow of the republic*, may in some measure be applied to those who advance under an appearance of reason to the destruction of the christian system. The deist, by discoursing learnedly on the sufficiency of the light of nature, endeavours to set aside the necessity of revelation. The sceptic, by displaying the obscurity in which all things are involved, would infer that our wisest course is to believe nothing. And the atheist, by his speculations on fate and chance, matter and motion, tries to pull up all religion by the roots, under a show of scientific wisdom.

The way of raillery is no less employed in this contest, and often with still more success. A noble writer* seems to have been of opinion, that if, instead of a serious opposition, this method had been used against the gospel at its first publication, it would never have obtained footing in the world. Whether the hint was partly taken from him, I know not; however, it is certain

* Lord Shaftsbury.

that, since his time, this engine has been played with singular industry.

Yet after all these assaults, whether grave or ludicrous, the truth of christianity remains unshaken; for as it stands confirmed by direct and positive evidence, amounting to the highest moral demonstration, no objections or railleries can ever affect the main cause.

One great artifice of unbelievers is to confound christianity with superstition, and then to triumph over both, when the victory is obtained only over the latter. In this the church of Rome has afforded them much advantage. Among the idle legends of monkish visions they would comprehend the most authentic records of divine revelation. Under the censure of unprofitable rigours and austerities, they would include all that self-denial which the gospel prescribes, and on which depends the very existence of true religion in the world. From the inefficacy of human penances and satisfactions, they would take occasion to expatiate in favour of virtue as the only meritorious

sacrifice. From the pompous puerilities of popish ceremonies, they would draw contempt on all external worship. To discredit the mysteries of christianity, they will, perhaps, ostentatiously expose the absurdity of transubstantiation, and then be ready to exclaim with a celebrated Arabian metaphysician *, *If the christians first make their god, and then eat him, let my soul remain with the philosophers.* Yet what have all these errors and depravations, or a thousand more, to do with the pure, primitive, unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ? Nothing.

As, therefore, these insidious attempts have no real force, except as they bear upon the corruptions of christianity, it may be hoped they will eventually conduce to its advancement.

Let us consider a little their effects on Roman catholic countries, which make up so large a portion of Christendom.

One effect undoubtedly is, the propagation of infidelity; by which I here understand a rejection of all revealed religion,

* Averroes.

whether real or fictitious. This however can hardly be supposed to happen unless among persons of some learning, who form the minor part in every nation. The mind, when rude or unlettered, is known to be strongly biassed, in the first instance, in favour of supernatural claims and pretensions; and to be more in danger of fanaticism or superstition, than of absolute infidelity; indeed a smattering of science often sets it too much the other way; while true wisdom gives it a due direction.

It seems, therefore, improbable, that the bulk of any people whatever should become mere sceptics and unbelievers; men who, of all others, are least likely to be wrought upon by reason or religion; and we have ground to believe, that even the generality of the French nation at this time, are rather wavering catholics than settled infidels; and that, in their present fluctuation of opinion, they are less indisposed to the reception of pure christianity, than before their bigotted attachment to popish errors and superstitions was shaken by the reason or the ridicule of their philosophers.

Thus may our modern infidels, however manifestly their design is to spread deism, and even atheism, be considered as pioneers preparing a freer course for the gospel; by removing some of those obstacles which superstition and bigotry had thrown in the way. We may consider Voltaire as a precursor of protestantism among his countrymen, by weakening the authority of the church of Rome, by exposing her corruptions, and by exciting a spirit of inquiry, which however dangerous when it runs to excess, is highly serviceable to the cause of truth when temperately exercised.

Further: Although the late commotions in France, for which she is not a little indebted to her philosophers, have terminated as such commotions have generally done, and therefore as might have been expected; we may still indulge a hope that, in the final result, the people, instructed by their experience of the two extremes of republican confusion and a military government, will be prepared to welcome and to improve a system of rational liberty, including, as I conceive every such system will do, a

general toleration in matters of religion. In which case, it is not improbable that the seeds of protestantism which remain scattered in that country would soon shoot up and multiply, that teachers would quickly arise from among themselves, and reformed churches spread themselves through the land; and that volatile nation, which has been the first in vanity and impiety, and the great corrupter of Europe, might, in no very distant period, thus become an example of sober manners, and unadulterated christianity.

By such an example, a spirit of reformation might find its way into other catholic countries, and gradually recover them to the purity of the gospel, both in its faith and worship.

IV. These conjectures, although the event should prove them to have been erroneous, correspond at least to the doctrine we would here inculcate, namely, That in order to peace of mind we should learn to view every thing on its best side, and in the fairest light. Where nature has bestowed

this turn of thinking, it is an inheritance beyond all outward possessions; and where it is wanting, it should be studiously sought as the most valuable acquisition of reason and philosophy; still more should we seek it as a fruit of that divine charity which *thinketh no evil, believeth all things, and hopeth all things.*

Such, however, is the scene which the world presents to us, that no man who duly consults his true interest and satisfaction, will dwell upon it more than is necessary for the regulation of his own conduct. Whichever way he directs his view, he is sure to meet with evils of every kind, no less to the hazard of his virtue, than to the disturbance of his peace; besides, without a strong mind, and a more than ordinary degree of piety, while he is curious to contemplate the present disordered state of things, he may find himself unhappily betrayed into a secret arraignment of the divine proceedings. *As for me,* says the Psalmist, *my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipt; for I was envious at the*

foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked *.

Wisdom would therefore teach us, to direct our inquiries rather inward than outward; instead of useless speculations upon the world, to pursue those which may lead us into a better acquaintance with ourselves, with God, and the world to come.

It would teach us also to lie as close and compact in life, as our civil and social duties will allow; since, to do otherwise, would only be to expose a broader mark to the arrows of fortune, to multiply our trials and temptations, and, at the same time, to abridge our present comfort, and obstruct our future happiness.

A taste for retirement, for calm occupations, and simple pleasures, ought diligently to be cultivated by every one who is ambitious of solid contentment, or who aspires after the dignity of independence. Sir William Temple, in a letter to the king, tells him, that should the court not suit him,

* Ps. lxxiii.

he knew the way back to his garden. For want of this power of abstraction, or, as Paschal says, *because so few can sit quiet in their own chamber*, the world is filled with so much competition and uproar.

But after every other resource, whether private or public, I would repeat it again (whatever the infidelity of the age may insinuate or affirm to the contrary) and repeat it as a sentiment that I wish to be ever impressed upon my own mind, and to leave impressed upon the mind of the reader,—*Religion is our only sure refuge in life and death.* All human power and prudence, all the policy of government, and the wisdom of philosophy, can provide no adequate defence against the evils, present and future, to which we stand exposed. *The name of the Lord is* the only impregnable *tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe* *.

* Prov. xviii. 10.

FINIS.

C. WHITTINGHAM, Printer, Dean Street.

ERRATA.

On account of the Author's distance from the press, a few typographical errors have escaped, which the reader is desired to correct, as follows:

Page 23. l. 16. *for* Ore, *read* Ære.
—— 97. l. 14. *for* a sudden, *read* an additional.
—— 101. l. 4. *for* desident esprimò, *read* desidentes primò; and l. 6. for *donce*, read *donec.*
—— 186. bottom line, *for* contracted, *read* controlled.
—— 218. l. 6. for *carious*, read *curious.*
—— 272. l. 21. *for* Thebis, *read* Thebes.
—— 385. l. 11. *for* Ninevah, *read* Nineveh.
—— 400. l. 9. *for* dit, *read* dise.

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